HOW THEY DID IT

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ANTHONY EDEN

By

L. RASKAY.

PILOT PRESS LTD.

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A Biography

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CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

"The wonder-baby of English politics" "meteoric rise," "triumphant youth" "charm paved the way for him." How often do we read such headings and remarks in the world Press in articles about Anthony Eden's life and career. The phrases have become shabby and threadbare; even serious political writers, well acquainted with circumstances, are influenced by them and use them without hesitation. These ornate adjectives have acquired almost the same constant character as the *epitheta ornans* which Homer uses for his heroes. The world, in its perfectly comprehensible quest for heroes—in a period when antipathetic heroes have gained the upper hand—is eager to believe in the 'Legend of Eden.' It is so fine to imagine that a shining knight without fear or blemish arises from the colourless waters of English politics and that, armed with the strength and faith of youth, he sets out for the world to fight for right and liberty, for peace and justice. . . .

In trying to give a brief sketch of Anthony Eden's

life, essential parts of this legend have to be destroyed. It is a thankless task; perhaps for once it would be finer to tell a world which enjoys romance only on the screen of cinemas, a film story of reality. But it is just this screen story conception of Anthony Eden's life which does him the greatest injustice. We know how painful he found the hysterical admiration which the over-enthusiastic ladies and spinsters of America manifested for him on the occasion of his visit to New York. Exaggerated idealisation robs Anthony Eden's political aims of their reality; but the political significance of Great Britain's former Foreign Secretary consists simply in a fundamentally realistic politician daring to have ideals and to fight for them. He had not conceived these ideals in his cradle; when he entered politics, he did not do so with the firm resolve to fight for a new international order, protecting the weak, checking the aggressor, creating an important part for Democracy in the relation of States. He was no more and no less than a young Conservative politician who had gone through the usual evolution of an Englishman of his class and who chose politics only because as a second son he had to choose a profession; in view of his social standing and the traditions of his family only diplomacy, civil service, church or politics could be considered. It would be difficult to say why he became a politician. It is said that Anthony Eden himself was rather at a loss as to

what to do when he returned to Oxford from the war; it was his mother's advice, which gave him the first incentive to adopt politics as a career.

Even later when he had entered the House of Commons and even acquired a certain fame, nothing pointed to the fact that Anthony Eden would become the exponent and symbol of a new political creed. He was bound by the principles of his party, his speeches mirrored a world of ideas which a young, ambitious, Conservative politician had to acquire successfully to find his niche in politics. Only gradually did he turn the principles and ideals, connected with his name to-day, into his life's ambition, and only through a comparatively long and manifold process of experience. Anthony Eden's career represents at the same time a continuous inner evolution. The outward signs of this career, his appointment to cabinet rank, his activity at Geneva, his great European trips, his becoming Foreign Secretary are at the same time milestones of his spiritual development, and the ripening of his political creed. But in our opinion the most important turning-point in Eden's development was not any of these milestones of success, but on the contrary his decision to renounce the outward triumphs and position of power. Anthony Eden achieved personal greatness primarily by his resignation.

Up to that moment he was a part of the political machine which moves the Government of Great

Britain. He had to fit into this machine; he was forced into compromises; he had not only to submit but often to suppress and deny his personal convictions. The words and actions of Eden were difficult to separate from the meaning and considerations of the whole cabinet. If his convictions pressed him to take an unmistakable stand, he was again and again forced to retrace his steps and to deny himself. He would probably have been able to continue this game for a long time. It is well known that he was allowed to go only with reluctance—but he found courage in the moment of decision to say "no"; he had given the world an example of how a democratic politician was able to make sacrifices for his faith. Thereby he proved not only his own greatness but also the significance of his faith which was worth such a sacrifice. This step must not be underestimated. Just because he was only forty when he renounced his position, this resignation must have been doubly difficult. He could not know, and even to-day it would be difficult to determine whether this step did not mean the end of Anthony Eden's public career. On the other hand this decision made of the politician and statesman something which was more than both—the personification of an ideal. His behaviour after his resignation disappointed many people. The majority of them had thought and hoped that he would use the moral power which this step gave him only to head a new movement, perhaps

even to found a new party; in other words to engineer a more or less revolutionary change in Great Britain's home politics. Those who held such hopes were fooled by the 'Eden Legend.' Eden is no apostle, no prophet, still less a revolutionary. It is highly doubtful whether his nature is that of a leader at all. His origin, his self-discipline, his deep-set roots in English political traditions, his contemplative spirit and perhaps his fundamentally shy and hesitant nature form the limits which he does not and cannot pass. His intention has been, and still is, to create a firmly constructed and assured international order; but he would never go so far as to uproot for this goal, the inner order of England of which he more or less approves. Eden's activity is characterised by a revolt against the dictatorship of foreign totalitarian states, but also by his fitting in with the traditional political framework of his country. It must not be forgotten that Anthony Eden is, in spite of all his liberality and the progressiveness of his ideas, a Conservative politician and probably never thinks of becoming anything else. It is also natural—an inspection of his career shows it clearly—that if he should turn into a different direction, he would be betraying himself and his past.

There is hardly anything sensational in the rise of Anthony Eden, even if many are inclined to invent such details. Strictly speaking he was

born into politics; or rather it depended only on him whether or not he would use the opportunities offered to him. Through his origin and his family connections he belongs to the social class which—in spite of all the changing times—still supplies Great Britain's political leaders. The English people do not follow the leadership of these elect by any compulsion—it is done with a willingness scarcely understood abroad. English aristocracy has proved itself much more adaptable, elastic and much wiser than the same social stratum of other countries. It has never, or but seldom, used its inherited special position rigidly to defend its privileges; it has always weighed carefully how the love of tradition in the British could be brought into harmony with the exigencies of social progress. It is another question whether this system of the selection of leaders from the nobility can be preserved for a long time. But up to our present days Great Britain has no reason to be other than content with this system.

The men who embodied the best racial qualities, who came from a financially sheltered existence into politics, were educated in Eton and Oxford, especially equipped for their task; they took care of the continuity of English public life and guarded it against all storms. Their influence on the usages of politics was so strong that even those who came into it from another world, had to submit to them as a matter of course. If English policy is to-day

rather helpless in face of the dictators, it can be explained by the fact that the spirit of this authoritative rule by force is so infinitely strange to the balanced harmony of English political life.

Within the last centuries it has been rather difficult to distinguish between aristocracy from the so-called landed gentry. The Eden family could be classified as belonging to both of them. Even if the branch to which Anthony Eden belongs has only a baronetcy to inherit, a great many ancestors and close relations of this branch are members of the peerage. The families of Brougham or Auckland—to name only two—are closely interrelated with Anthony Eden's house. Durham, in the North of England where the ancestral home of the Edens still stands, has been the home of the family for many centuries. The estate in the vicinity of Bishop Auckland has been in the hands of the Edens for at least four hundred years. During the course of the centuries they have not only retained but considerably enlarged their possessions. Only recently was Timothy Eden, Anthony's elder brother, forced to sell part of it for settlement purposes. The economic changes of the last decades did not pass the wealth of Eden without affecting it.

Windlestone Hall, the mansion of the Edens, was built probably in the fifteenth century but it has been ascertained that in the first decade of the sixteenth century it belonged already to the

family. Even if it is not one of the famous English castles, it can be well classified under the heading of 'stately homes.' Like most great English country houses it bears in its architecture the signs of different periods; some parts were destroyed, others added; but from these divergences, as in the case of so many English castles, was born an individual harmony which brings together the different styles into a close unity. In the gentle hills of the landscape, surrounded by a huge park where the lovely green lawn alternates with gleaming pools, the Edens had had their home for generations; and in the same park where the young Anthony played, had roamed his ancestors out of whose ranks English public life had recruited a great many important personalities.

The greatest historical fame was achieved among Eden's ancestors by the statesman and diplomat William who—strangely enough—was also a third son just as two hundred years later was the other great Eden, Anthony. The strength of the traditions in the evolution of an English noble family is shown by the fact that William Eden, born in 1744, received almost the same education as Anthony, born in 1898. Both of them went to Eton and from there to Oxford (in the same Christ Church College). Other interesting similarities can be found in both careers. William Eden was twenty-eight when he first became known already as a prominent jurist, appointed Under-Secretary of State; about the

same age Anthony entered the Government for the first time, being appointed parliamentary private secretary of the Foreign Secretary, Sir Austen Chamberlain. William Eden did great service for England as a close collaborator and confidential friend of Pitt, in different positions. He was several times a member of the Cabinet ; he fulfilled difficult diplomatic tasks as ambassador and was a member of various important committees. In 1778, for instance, he went to America to pacify the incipient, revolt. The memory of the great Eden's American mission was revived when—a short time ago—Anthony Eden visited the United States.

But the strangest similarity in the activity of the two Edens is the principle of 'non-intervention' which they both advocated. Of course, this expression which later received such a sad interpretation, had not yet been invented in the time of William Eden. But the goal which William Eden strived to attain in 1787 was about the same for which Anthony fought a hundred and fifty years later. At that time Great Britain was trying to defend Holland from a foreign invasion ; William Eden's task was to demand a declaration from the French Minister, Montmorin, that the Government of France had no intention of meddling with armed force in the affairs of the Netherlands. Montmorin pressed by Eden gave the declaration, but he demanded as a condition that the Prussian troops should be withdrawn from Holland. He solemnly declared

that French officers and troops had never set foot on Dutch soil, but—strange irony of history—the English were well aware at that time that French forces had been present for some period in Holland.

His progressive intentions—among others he fought very energetically for a humane reform in penal law—brought William Eden into conflict with the Pitt Government and he severed his connection with Pitt almost in the same dramatic way as a hundred and fifty years later Anthony Eden severed his affiliation with Neville Chamberlain. William Eden was raised to the English peerage with the title of Lord Auckland. His son, whose mother was a sister of Lord Minto, became a second famous Eden: George Eden Auckland who was made a viscount just a hundred years ago. As Governor General of India he directed a campaign against the rebellious Afghans. Other Edens became famous in their time: Emily Eden was an interesting personality of the nineteenth century and a well-known authoress. Governors, bishops, and high civil servants are also found in the ranks of the Eden family.

In direct line, Anthony Eden is descended from the eldest brother of the first Baron Auckland. According to complicated rules of the inheritance of the title the baronetcy came to Anthony Eden's father who was called William.

Sir William Eden was no doubt one of the strangest

personalities of pre-war times. His son Timothy set up a memorial to this strange man in a deeply understanding biography. But even Timothy Eden could not portray or explain the complicated being of this eccentric who combined the most sensitive, artistic nature with the vivacity of a go-getter; a love of nature and contempt of humans; a man who never let anybody approach him and who, in spite of all the affection for his family, remained, uncannily, a stranger to his sons.

A sturdy, splendid figure of a man, one of the best shots and most daring horsemen of the County of Durham. As a boxer he beat a great many professionals; beside all his brilliance in sport he was also a fine painter whose pictures aroused admiration in his time at all the leading exhibitions of the period. His water colours are still appreciated even if they are not characterised by genius.

Anthony Eden is considered to be the personification of the well-dressed Englishman—but his father was quite the opposite. He hated evening dress; he preferred to go about in a shabby hunter's coat and a shabby cap. But he was the antithesis of his son in every other respect, too. Anthony is characterised by an admirable self-discipline, by a moderation in his habitat and expression; his father was the personification of an unfettered temper.

Several authors who have written about Anthony Eden's youth, try to explain the personality of

the subsequent statesman through his relations to his father. They maintain that his even temper, his reserve and his formality are the consequence of his childhood, during which he was intimidated—just like his brothers—by a fuming, over-sensitive father always prone to outbursts. The self-discipline of the son would be a defensive measure against the undisciplined temper of his father. This theory seems to be very artificial for several reasons. In the first place one must not forget that Sir William, in spite of all his eccentricity and the passionate spontaneity of his character, was a highly cultured and sensitive man who never tyrannised over his sons in any way. Also, the influence of their mother, an aristocratic personality both spiritually and physically, that of a quiet, gentle and understanding woman was much stronger than that of the father. The circumstance alone that, in spite of all the curious qualities of Sir William, their marriage was extraordinarily happy and that the rather irritable father adored his father with a knightly passion—this circumstance alone proves fully that the picture of an intimidated boy does not correspond to reality. But in the first place we must bear in mind that the influence of the parental home is never so strong for English children as in Continental countries. The influence of school is far more decisive ; school takes the burden of education from the parents—especially in families with the social standing of the Edens. From early childhood till the end of the

university career the children are in truth only guests in the parental home and are treated with the considerations due to guests. As in the case of others, Anthony Eden also left Windlestone Hall at the age of nine, and spent his whole adolescence in boarding schools. From school he went directly into the army and after four years' army service to the university; from there almost immediately into politics. When he finished his studies, his father was no longer alive.

In spite of all it is certain that a colourful personality like Sir William's must have influenced his surroundings and in the first place his family. We have already mentioned that the master of Windlestone made his own rules. His closest family circle saw him in even more unusual dress. When he designed his own clothes he always displayed a stubborn but picturesque imagination. He wore wide, unpressed velvet trousers and jackets of colourful silks. Thus he wandered around his estate which, in spite of his eccentricity, he farmed most efficiently. And that was no small matter, as more than four thousand acres belonged to the Edens. His love of nature made him a great lover of flowers, but, for instance, he could not bear plants of red colour and when he discovered a blossom of this hue, he was liable to fly into a terrible rage; pots flew around in the glasshouse and oaths were heard which made the squire famous throughout

the whole county. He was, always greatly excited by the barking of dogs; even the cries of children made him lose his temper. He hated alcohol, the smell of whisky made him bad-tempered, just as he was over-sensitive to tobacco smoke. All that he disliked he considered as a personal provocation. When he heard a shrill whistle in the street, he was apt to fly into a rage and might even throw something through the window, without of course wanting to hurt anyone.

His attitude towards politics was also rather strange. This landed gentleman with almost mediæval manners, had naturally no love for Socialists. He was especially annoyed by the middle-class or almost middle-class followers of the workers' movements, whom he abused as 'Bowler-hatted Socialists.' It was strange, however, that he felt the same about the Conservatives to whom he should have belonged by his origin and social standing. He stood in constant conflict with general views. He was just as far from war enthusiasm as from understanding any internationalism. In the years of the greatest martial intoxication he roared angrily: "We hear of nothing but those gallant Belgians but what of those poor devils of Germans mown down in thousands as they advance?"

In his artistic principles he was merciless. Thus he had his famous controversy with the great painter, Whistler, who had the same unruly temperament and that was the reason why he hated so-

called modern architecture (in spite of his painting being comparatively modern), and shunned London. But if he went to the capital he could not master his indignation, and the sight of a hated new building incited him to new oaths and abuses.

The children—in the first place sensitive and highly-strung Anthony—tried to find some line of sympathy with their father but without success. It was not their fault, nor, perhaps, that of their father. His stubborn character had no understanding for youth. Its gaiety annoyed him, the jumpiness and chaos of their thoughts repulsed him, his over-sensitive nerves prevented him from being a kind father to his children. In spite of all this, many things point to the fact that he loved them very much although he could not bridge the gulf. No father could have written more affectionately to his son than did William Eden when Anthony was depressed during his first years at Eton by the petty discomforts of the fag-period :

"Be not downcast, oh my soul ! Hope thou in the Lord ! You are not a waster, thank God. You may yet be as great and good a man as Your affectionate Daddie."

We must concede, however, that the religious tone of this letter sounds rather unconvincing as William Eden refused to accept any religion. When his son Anthony—to the great surprise of the family—won a religious competition at Eton, the Brinkman Divinity Prize, his father was not

at all happy about this achievement of his son. He gave free rein to his irony when he spoke about the possibility of a church career for Anthony.

The Great War brought especially deep sorrow to the Eden family. Out of the four sons, two, the eldest and the youngest, had fallen. When referring to the special standing of English nobility we must emphasise that these families also acknowledged special duties which their position in English public life demanded of them. We feel that we are not in error in saying that in no other country has the aristocracy suffered such losses as in Great Britain. Especially in the years when by volunteering for service an example had to be given, this social stratum of English society showed that it realised and was worthy of its part.

All four sons of Sir William fought for their country. John, the oldest, who was called Jack by the family, had already fallen in October, 1914, on the Western Front. Two years later, at the historic battle of Jutland, the waves engulfed the youngest son. The little cadet Nicholas Eden was just sixteen when he died a hero's death. Timothy Calvert Eden, the second son, biographer of his father and heir to the baronetcy, was in Germany at the outbreak of the war and interned for two years in Ruhleben. But in 1916, when Nicholas died, he managed to return to England where he volunteered at once and fought till the end of the

war in France. About Anthony's part in the war we shall speak later.

When the war had ended, of the five children of Lady Eden only three were left, beside the two sons Timothy and Anthony there remained her only daughter Elfrida Marjorie, the future Lady Warwick, who was the eldest of them.

Lady Eden who loved her children more than anything in the world carried her burden of sorrow with dignity and greatness. Over her most difficult days the infinitely touching letters of young Anthony helped her; she has kept them carefully to this very day. A little clumsily, but full of deep feelings, the sixteen-year-old boy wrote when he heard of the death of his eldest brother:

Dearest Mummie—My tutor has just told me. How dreadful for you. I will do what I can and whatever you want, of course.

Poor Little Mummie—you are having a fearfully trying time just now. But we must all do our share and the greater the share the greater the honour, if it is nobly borne. Poor little Nicholas, too! I fear it will be a sad blow to him, but we must all take our share.

I will do all I can but I wish Tim was home to help comfort you. Please excuse my writing. I can't realise it yet. God bless you and reward you.

Much love and comfort from your very affectionate son,

Anthony.

This letter alone shows the deeply affectionate relations of mother and son. Lady Eden, in her youth, one of the most celebrated beauties of the late Victorian age has followed Anthony's career from his earliest childhood to the present day with understanding love. We have to thank the mother for the greater part of what we know about Anthony Eden's youth. And even now when the boy has become a figure of world history, she still busies herself carefully, cutting out of the newspapers, everything published about her boy and pasting it into a huge scrapbook. Mother-love tends towards exaggeration but Lady Eden may claim the great satisfaction of having been the first to recognise the future greatness of her son. When his associates did not see much in the quiet, reserved youth, she read all that was later proved to the full from small details which others would not have noticed.

Speaking about the paternal ancestry of Anthony Eden we have shown the inherited qualities for a political career; but if we consider his mother's family, this becomes even more marked. Lady Sybil Eden was the daughter of Sir William Grey, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and later Governor of Jamaica. Sir William, descended from the old noble family of Grey which must be counted among the English houses giving the most important men to England. It was Charles Grey who founded the baronetcy and later the earldom; he was one of the most brilliant generals in the American War of

Independence. His son of the same name was one of the greatest statesmen of the nineteenth century; as Prime Minister he became famous for all time as creator and sponsor of the Reform Bill. Among other outstanding politicians, Viscount Grey of Fallodon, the Foreign Secretary of the first war years belonged to this house. Through the family of Grey, Anthony Eden is the descendant of some of the first noblemen of England, that of the Mowbrays, the Dukes of Norfolk and of the Nevilles, Earls of Westmorland.

Through Lady Eden we know that Anthony was a little slow, dreamy, absent-minded boy. But he showed interest for things which hardly occupied other boys of his age. Thus, for instance, when he went on a railway trip with his mother, he read all the names of the stations and then enumerated—to Lady Eden's great surprise—the Members of Parliament representing the different constituencies.

His talent for painting was inherited from his father; even if later he had hardly any opportunity to practise his beloved art, he has always remained an art connoisseur of the first water. As student and later as politician he gave considerable time and care to the technique and criticism of art. Lady Eden who had strong intellectual interests created a cultural and artistic atmosphere in the home. There were musical evenings and a Shakespeare reading circle. Anthony had no use for the musical evenings, on the contrary, he proved

highly unmusical, so much so that he could hardly bear to hear the duets of his brothers and sister. " Oh, stop that din ! " he would cry as he rushed from the room. But he took part whole-heartedly in the Shakespeare circle, being especially interested in the historical dramas ; Lady Eden concluded from this that her son had great talent for history.

Fundamentally he was a quiet, good boy, who preferred reading to wild games but he also liked to play with soldiers and collected stamps.

Lady Eden remembers well that Tony, even as a boy, was always ready to stand by his convictions. Once, walking with his mother, he noticed a coach-man mishandling his horses. He jumped to the man, caught the whip from his hand and, weak as he was, began to beat the man. But such outbursts were very rare in the boy. His absent-mindedness was shown much more frequently. He would come downstairs with his hat in his hand and then proceed to search the whole house for it. Once he was so lost in thought that he said his evening prayers on the garden swing. When his mother asked him, in surprise, what he was doing, he replied that he was just going to bed. Only then did he notice where he was.

At the age of nine Tony left the parental home to go to one of the most distinguished preparatory schools and from there to proceed to Eton. The Sandroyd School, near Cobham, has been traditionally a

first step towards Eton and Christ Church College. Members of royal families have sat in the same benches as did the little Anthony.

We do not know much about how he spent the four years in Cobham under Mr. Wilson, the head-master. Suffice to say that Anthony Eden was thirteen when he entered Eton.

The photographs of this period show a thin, well-developed boy with a mouth opened in slight wonder and dreamy, but not uncertain eyes. The Eton collar and hat suit him well and he knows how to wear his clothes in a way which foretells the later *arbiter elegantiarum*. Of course, later the years of the war robbed him of the habit of elegance and in Oxford he certainly did not belong to the group of best-dressed students of the university.

In 1911 he went to Eton where he was placed in the house of Ernest Lee Churchill. Churchill, one of the best athletes and strokes of his time, was especially interested in the physical training of his pupils; through many generations he was one of the best-loved personalities in Eton, known by his boys as 'Jelly.'

The fag-time was comparatively easy for the sensitive boy; his brother Timothy had not yet left Eton and was able to take him under his protection. If someone becomes an important man later in life, it is usual to try and find signs of his greatness in his schooldays. In Anthony Eden's case this would be a rather difficult task; he did not shine

much at Eton, he was an average scholar with certain special interests but not outstanding. He fulfilled his duties honestly but he was unable to climb to any of the peak positions in Eton's hierarchy. During a debate with the Labour leader Hugh Dalton who spoke about social privileges, Eden replied with a slight joke that Dalton had achieved greater successes at Eton and Oxford than had he, Anthony Eden, himself.

Eton has the advantage of letting boys with outstanding qualities prove their mettle. In this the most distinguished school of Great Britain, pupils have an autonomy of wide scope and the boys who show early talents for leadership are selected for a privileged circle which possesses both outwardly and in its relation to the fellow-students, certain marked rights. Anthony Eden did not belong to this circle of the elect. He was probably well talented for a more outstanding position in the community—he was a boy with strong spiritual interests, riper than his age and even in games above the average—but, as we shall see later, he was never a so-called leader who would try to place himself with energy and full knowledge of his goal above the others. There are hardly any signs in Anthony Eden's school years to point to the important politician of the future. On the contrary, his teachers rather suspected in him the tendencies for a career in the Church as he was deeply interested in the study of the Bible and, as we have mentioned

before, became the winner of a theological competition. As for games he was not among the most brilliant boys of his class, but he achieved fine results in different branches of sport. He played football and belonged to the cricket eleven of his house, but preferred rowing in which sport he produced the best results. Had he not joined the army at the age of seventeen, he would probably have represented his school.

As for his political interests, they are betrayed in this period only by one of his letters addressed to his mother. In its freshness and sincerity it gives us a very fine picture of the sixteen years old Eton boy:

> *Dear Mummie—thank you very much for your letter. Only three weeks more on Friday. I am looking forward to being home again. I have done very badly in the history thing, I am afraid. The French exam. is on Tuesday; there is one boy who is rather good, but I think I can manage to beat the rest.*
>
> *On Thursday, St. Andrew's Day, we stop compulsory football. I will write you again on Thursday because I think a good many things are going to happen on Thursday. Good-bye for the present, with much love from your very loving son, Anthony.*
>
> *P.S. These by-elections are simply splendid. They show how the people hate the Insurance Bill, and I think we may have some chance of winning the next General Election, unless the Government tell the country too many lies.*

Soon the cares and joys of school were at an end. Young Anthony had to face quite different tribulations. As soon as he reached the age suitable for military duty, he volunteered, although one of his brothers had already fallen and another was held prisoner in a German internment camp. But for Anthony Eden it was natural to fulfil his duty as all other Edens did. We must add, however, that he was only doing what all his friends did at the time. His twenty-six classmates all volunteered and nine of them were killed.

CHAPTER II

BITTER EXPERIENCE

In September, 1915, Anthony Eden—not yet eighteen—joined the army coming straight from school. He was sent to the King's Royal Rifle Corps and commissioned as lieutenant. As soon as possible he went overseas; his training lasted only a few months. The early spring of the next year found him on the Western Front. The rigid trench warfare of this period gave little opportunity to individuals to perform acts of heroism. But there was plenty of opportunity to realise the futility and stupidity of all sacrifices. Lady Eden is justified in saying that the time in the front lines had great influence over the later development of her son. In his most impressionable years he spent many months facing the enemy. "Anthony, along with the other brave fellows who served here knows all the ghastliness of war because he went through it all himself when he was but a lad." He was a good comrade and an understanding, sympathetic officer; his letters which he wrote home are full of anxiety for his men and he often asked his mother

who was managing a war hospital, to try and get his men under her care. His exemplary fulfilment of his duties was the more commendable as he had not felt enthusiasm for the war—not for a single moment. He longed for home and wrote: "I do wish this beastly war would end."

But the end was still far away. Anthony Eden spent more than two years in the front lines. To a certain extent all that we have said about his schooldays could be applied to his war service. He was not among the officers who shone through a special energy or daring deeds of heroism. But in the execution of duties and in his tenacity and spirit of comradeship he was unsurpassable. He did not receive his decoration, the Military Cross, for any special achievement, but with others on the occasion of the King's birthday as a reward of his general conduct. The feeling of responsibility in the young officer attracted the attention of his superiors; at nineteen he became A.D.C. of his regiment, the youngest A.D.C. of the British Army, just as he attained several positions of rank as a junior. From Ypres he was sent to the Somme; at twenty he was already a Captain. At the end of the war he was given the task of a Brigade-Major on the staff of his brigade.

Apart from the general impressions which he gained during the gory months on the Somme, this period made a certain impression in a different direction on him. There was a time when it looked

as if two men who more or less faced each other on the Somme would be brought nearer through sharing this experience and would be able to bridge the gulf between two people by this personal memory. Corporal Adolf Hitler fought on the German side in the same sector of the front where, on the other side, the young Captain Anthony Eden was stationed. This was discovered during a banquet on the occasion of his second trip to Berlin when the German Fuehrer honoured his British guest. Somehow the talk was directed to the war, Eden mentioned some episode, the name of a village, Hitler became attentive, took a menu card and began to sketch with his practised hand the spot where he had lain with his regiment on the Somme. He gave the sketch to the young English politician and so the two found out that about twenty years previously they had fought on almost the same place. A lively conversation followed and it seemed as if Hitler, who has always emphasised his war service, showed great sympathy for the British ex-Service man. But soon these memories faded and Anthony Eden became one of the most hated of all men in the eyes of the dictator of the Third Reich. Yet Eden took the menu card with the historic sketch and kept it as one of his most interesting souvenirs.

Generally speaking Eden seldom mentions his experiences in the war and has dropped the title of Captain which still clung to his name in the first

years of his political career. On the whole he does not care for titles ; we won't find any trace of the 'Right Honourable' in front of his name although he is entitled to use it. When, during one of the great debates on disarmament he spoke about his years on the front, he emphasised more the general experience of a soldier than his own military past. He said what a terrible impression an air raid of enemy bombers had made on all those who witnessed it ; it had happened during the last weeks of the war and it awakened with cruel strength the vision of a future Armageddon.

Bomb followed bomb for a quarter of an hour, one of his comrades, fascinated by the indescribable impression said : "Here now, you have had your first taste of the next war."

From this experience Eden deduced that ex-Service men must have the greatest horror of war ; especially those who during the last months and weeks of World War had received an inkling how the war of the future would shape.

Even if Anthony Eden had perhaps never spoken about his personal part in the events of the Great War, there is another witness ; a witness who can be considered as more than authoritative as he has to thank Anthony Eden, the eighteen-year-old lieutenant, for his life. This man—already middle-aged at the time of the war—is Mr. W. H. Harrop, now manager of an industrial plant in Sheffield. He describes how a small party of soldiers was

appointed under the command of Lieutenant Eden to undertake a sudden attack against the enemy trenches, and bring back prisoners. They tried to mask themselves by blacking their faces while they were pressing towards the enemy but the Germans discovered them and started a volley of machine-gun and revolver fire. The little company had to return and all of them succeeded in reaching safety—all except Private Harrop. He was left between the trenches, in no-man's-land, with grave injuries, exposed to certain death.

But Lieutenant Eden had kept check on all his men and when he noticed that Harrop was missing, he did not hesitate for a moment. With two volunteers he returned to the danger zone and with the greatest personal self-sacrifice saved Harrop from certain annihilation. Harrop was so badly wounded that he had to have thirty-five operations but at last he recuperated and ever since then he has been in constant correspondence with Eden to whom he owes his life. With the fervour of sincere gratitude he says about Eden that he was just as fearless as a soldier as he was later a fearless politician.

CHAPTER III

'BELATED STUDIES'

DECORATED with the rank of a captain, but with the loss of two of his brothers, Anthony Eden returned at the end of the war into civilian life, just twenty-one years old. Now he had to continue where he had stopped; in other words, to begin life. But the experience of two terrible years had made the Eton boy a man. Outwardly he was still so young-looking that even his own men called him 'the boy' at the front. But inside, a certain, very understandable tiredness and aimlessness overwhelmed him. As so many others, it was difficult for him to find the way back. He did not really know how he should begin with himself. When his mother—his father had died and his brother Timothy inherited title and estate—proposed that he should go to Oxford, Anthony looked at her with surprise and hesitation. "Why, mother, do you expect me to go back to school?" The thought that, after the years at Ypres and the Somme, life should continue regularly seemed to him unbelievable. And after the war life could not

be the same for Anthony Eden as before. Perhaps he was more sensitive than his contemporaries; perhaps the impressions of war left a deeper trace in him than in many of his comrades; perhaps the seriousness of his nature became even more marked. Nothing is less true than the picture which many—and especially Americans—paint of Anthony Eden, conceiving him as a smiling Apollo, an elegant man-about-town, a resplendent figure of musical comedy politics. The handsome figure, the youthful way and the self-disciplined balance of Eden, invite such exaggeration. Fundamentally Eden was always more serious and in a certain sense older than his contemporaries. Youth worships him to-day because he has the courage to possess ideals, but in truth Eden never found an inner contact with youth. The 'young man' age dropped out of his life: as a boy he went to war; when four years later he entered the university, he was a man.

So he was unable to take part in the usual 'doings' of the university students; he could find no joy in the lively but often childish discussions of the Oxford clubs, nor in the sports which for so many young men become the whole aim of their lives. He joined the Oxford Dramatic Society but never took part in its work; he played tennis but only to find relaxation after his exhausting studies. Eden found refuge from his war memories in work. For him the period at Oxford really meant years

of study and education. Socially he did very little; just as later, in spite of his appearance which seemed to belie the fact, he was never a man-about-town. In Oxford he selected only a small circle of friends who more or less shared his interests. He spent his time first of all in the study of Oriental languages, but he also followed his personal passion of the history of art. His two professors, Margoliouth and Dewhurst, had a very high opinion of his abilities; the latter is supposed to have been the first to recognise Eden's future career and said: "This young man will be Foreign Secretary before he is forty." Whether this prophecy was really made or only invented later cannot be told. It is possible that Anthony Eden had spoken about his plans to his teacher whom he respected; perhaps in his heart he had decided to choose politics for a career. But he did not realise his intentions through early political activity; he rather studied his subjects intensively. He passed his examinations with the highest honours and received the rare 'first' in Oriental languages. He qualified in Persian and Arabic; his interest for the East strongly influenced even his later political work. It is a strange coincidence that he had so much to do in Parliament, in the beginning as well as later, with problems of Persia, and even more, with those of the Arabic world.

Was he really interested in politics? His career gives an unqualified affirmative to this question.

But a lecture which he delivered as a student shows that he had first to fight a certain inner battle before he decided on a public career. His leanings towards art—the heritage of his father—was still very much alive in him. In a small Oxford circle he spoke about the great French impressionist painter Cézanne in whom he was so deeply interested even later. This lecture remained without any effect at that time: it could not have been otherwise. But to-day it has a certain significance. It gives us an insight into the spiritual life of the young Anthony Eden.

"To live entirely for his art; to renounce all else—that was the example that Cézanne gave us—a hatred of worldly things whether practical or scheming; a hatred of prejudice; a hatred of honours and flattery; a hatred of commerce and hypocrisy—Cézanne embodies all that."

Only a man can speak with such passion about the example of another human being who feels a deep affinity with the spirit of that other. Undoubtedly Cézanne's example offered a strong temptation which he, however, did not follow. He decided on a different road which led him into the opposite direction; but he remained faithful to some of the principles which he found in Cézanne's life. He, too, hated prejudices and hypocrisies.

If one of his professors really did recognise the future statesman in him, this belief was by no means general in Oxford. His fellow-students who

came into closer contact with him found him likeable, but not especially important. Beverley Baxter says somewhere that, during his years at Oxford, Eden was, according to the opinion of his colleagues, more ' argumentative ' than logical; he talked rather much, smiled quickly, sometimes he showed a flash of temper; altogether he seemed to be nothing more than a dilettante trying to forget the dirt and horror of war.

His political interest was awakened right from the beginning more by observation of foreign policy than through considerations of home affairs. Many years were to pass without Anthony Eden having much that was original to say about home policies. He dutifully adopted the Conservative ideas and knew how to present them in a smooth but rather impersonal form. The study of the Arabian and Persian world opened his eyes to the problems of the British Empire; he gave his attention to the question of Palestine, the situation and significance of Egypt; during his three years at Oxford he collected a treasure-trove of knowledge about the Near and Far East possessed by but few of his contemporaries.

The choice of his party was no problem for him; he did not think of the possibility of joining the Liberals or—a thought which must have seemed ridiculous to young Eden—the Socialists. To be a Conservative was for him more than a conviction: it was a matter of fact. We must never forget this

prelude to his political career when in later years we want to find the answer to the riddle why Eden had kept faith with the Conservatives in spite of all the differences with the leader of his party.

There must have been a great many young men of twenty-four in 1922 who would have been glad to choose a career in politics. But not every one of them was an Eden, *i.e.*, not every one of them was helped so prominently by his heritage and the financial position of his family and even more by the widespread connections it possessed as was the young Oxford student who entered the electoral struggle almost straight from the university. We have tried to show that he had the inner justification for such a beginning. We must only add that the future Foreign Secretary had acquired a considerable knowledge of languages. It is said that he had learned German from the books which he propped up in front of him while he shaved. French he acquired in direct contact with the French people. He often used his holidays to stay at the country house of a French clergyman and perfect his linguistic talents on French soil. His connections with French culture were always a matter of the heart for Anthony Eden. Whether justly or unjustly, France was often called his spiritual home. He had, at any rate, an extensive knowledge of French literature, and art even as a young student, he continued his deep studies

of French culture even after politics gave him hardly any time for his private interests. In his foreign policy he was often denounced as a friend of the French. If this expression should denote prejudice or a bias for the French, it is false; but there is no doubt that his spiritual connections with France were much more intimate and cordial than those with other European countries.

At the elections of 1922 Anthony Eden contested a seat in his home county, Durham. The Spennymoor Division, with its large mining population in these years of the Labour Party's rise, was not very hopeful for a Conservative candidate; but the young newcomer to politics could not expect a safe seat right at the beginning. Eden had first to win his spurs; his opponent was the talented Liberal Tom Wing, and a veteran of the Labour movement, the fifty-five-years-old J. Batey, once a miner himself. Wing and Eden had little prospect of success; the speeches which Anthony Eden delivered during his canvassing tour were not of a very convincing nature. As we have said, he used the usual arguments for the advantages of a Conservative régime in England, according to the instructions of the party. The discussion of the necessity of capitalists for the economic development and recovery of the country could hardly make a lasting impression on the Durham miners. It is remarkable that Eden's political sponsor at his start was the arch-Conservative

Marquess of Londonderry, a politician who—many years later—opposed Anthony Eden's foreign policy more strongly than anyone else. Eden lost the election as he might have expected; John Batey polled more votes than the Conservative and Liberal candidates together. Eden had no reason to be ashamed of his failure. After him many Conservative candidates tried to win Spennymoor from the Socialists. They did not succeed. Batey, Eden's triumphant opponent, is still representing it in Parliament.

CHAPTER IV

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

EDEN had probably foreseen the course of events and was not disappointed. He had probably been assured that he would get a more hopeful seat to contest the next time. This opportunity came earlier than he himself perhaps hoped. A by-election became necessary the next year in the county of Warwick; Sir Ernest Pollock (the future Lord Hanworth), the Member of Parliament for Warwick and Leamington, was appointed to a high judicial post and had to resign from Parliament. Warwick and Leamington was a safe Conservative seat which Sir Ernest had kept securely for many years. When Eden was sent to contest it, he could more or less count on attaining his aim. But he could not know that the election would have an especially favourable outcome for him. It became one of the most interesting elections of the first post-war years. Eden owed this to his Socialist opponent; under the red flag the young Tory was opposed by no less a person than the Mistress of Warwick Castle herself: the Countess of Warwick.

This interesting woman would have been sufficient to direct the curiosity of the public to the coming election campaign. When she came forward in 1923 as Labour candidate, she had already passed her sixtieth year, an almost legendary figure. Her name was connected with the most brilliant time of the Victorian and Edwardian age. We cannot tell the romantic life story of this interesting woman in these pages. Even if we are strongly tempted to do so, we can only say a few words. The young aristocratic girl was one of the most beautiful of her period. As the daughter of the Hon. C. H. Maynard, heiress of the late Viscount Maynard, she was one of the best 'catches' around 1880. She was such a coveted and brilliant girl that Disraeli had nothing less in mind than to marry her to Queen Victoria's youngest son, Prince Leopold. The Queen liked the plan, all preparations were made to bring the young people together and then the unexpected happened. Frances Maynard refused the royal prince and fell in love with his aide-de-camp, Lord Brooke, the future Earl of Warwick. She was sincere enough to tell the truth to Prince Leopold who, on the other hand, possessed the necessary understanding for noble resignation. Lady Brooke, later Countess of Warwick, became the social centre of the late Victorian age. Her lavish parties, her gowns, her jewels, were the sensations of those days. Once she prepared one of the most luxurious, the grandest

banquet of all; the newspapers discussed it in columns of print a long time before the actual date. The ball was a great success, but the next day the obscure Socialist paper *Clarion* published a bitter, furious attack against the Countess, who threw thousands of pounds away on parties while hundreds of thousands were without even the bare necessities of life. The author of the article was Robert Glandford, the outstanding Radical publicist. Most people of Lady Warwick's class would have cared nothing about such an episode; but as she was energetic and adventurous, next day she went up to London to tell that 'rude man' her opinion. Their meeting was quite different from what she had expected. In the tiny editorial office an animated discussion began which lasted for several hours; when Lady Warwick left the house, she was a different woman. She became a Socialist. Her newly-won conviction was not just a whim. She devoted an endless amount of work, time and money to the Socialist cause, she exposed herself to the anger of the Court, she spoke at election meetings, founded Socialist educational institutes, and became the pioneer of a new social order. When women had at last won their political equality, Lady Warwick came forward to fight for the Labour Party in the district where stood her world-famous castle.

The election caused the more interest becaues it was a great try-out of the reactions of women

when one of their own sex and such an outstanding personality demanded their trust. Lady Warwick's life would have been enough to secure the 'romantic atmosphere' of the election contest; but another motive was added, giving it a highly picaresque flavour. Lady Warwick was the mother-in-law of Anthony Eden's sister. Her son and heir had married Elfrida Marjorie Eden; thus Lady Warwick was opposing a near relation by marriage. But these family ties were destined to become even closer. One of Lady Warwick's daughters was the second wife of one of the most important persons in Yorkshire, Sir Gervase Beckett, proprietor of the *Yorkshire Post*, chairman of the Westminster Bank, a *tycoon* of heavy industry and landowner. Sir Gervase's first marriage with the daughter of Lord Feiversham was blessed by a daughter, Beatrice. She was eighteen when she became Anthony Eden's wife. At the time of the election Lady Warwick was facing a man who was—twice her relative.

It was natural, in the face of family connections between the Warwicks and the Edens, that Anthony and Beatrice were destined to meet; but they came close to each other only in the excitement of the election. Marriage with Beatrice Beckett was without doubt a great asset to Anthony Eden's political career.

His future father-in-law was one of the most influential personalities in the Conservative Party; a close friend of Baldwin and Austen Chamberlain;

in the *Yorkshire Post* he had a public organ which, through its serious tone and big circulation, was of exceptional importance both for the party and later for Eden personally. To marry into the Beckett family helped Eden later to his great trip through the British Empire which had an immense importance for his political evolution.

The seat of Warwick and Leamington belonged in truth directly to the family of Warwick. Their estates in the district came to about twenty-three thousand acres. But the election proved how these estates were a weapon against Lady Warwick. The honest citizens and peasants of the constituency were unable to take seriously a Socialist candidate who was, at the same time, Mistress of Warwick Castle and owner of this huge mass of land. The best years of the Countess of Warwick had passed, she had lost much of her former fire and captivating passion. The nineteen thousand women who had received the vote for the first time were more impressed by the youth and favourable appearance of the Conservative candidate than by the personality of the Socialist Countess. In spite of the family connections the contest was fought with unsurpassable seriousness. Eden who, after all, has no strong sense of humour, did not try to emphasise the funny aspects of the situation; he spoke of his sister's mother-in-law as if she were a stranger. "I have to oppose the Socialist candidate," he said, "even on this point. . . ."

In the midst of the contest Miss Beatrice Beckett was married to Mr. Anthony Eden in the most exclusive church of the capital, St. Margaret's, Westminster. It was a big society wedding with bridesmaids, pages and all the usual fuss. The Archbishop of York officiated.

Looking at the wedding picture, one has the impression that Eden was older then than he is now. But this is explained by the fact that he wore a moustache twice as thick as later; even when he entered Parliament, he kept this thick 'officer's moustache' which became smaller and smaller in time till it attained its present 'Eden form.'

Election day was near and so the young couple had only two days' honeymooning. The world, hungry for sensations, had hoped that they would spend it in Warwick Castle, but they went to Sussex.

But polling day did not come as soon as expected. In the meantime Parliament was dissolved; Anthony Eden could not enter the old one. Instead he was elected a Member of the House of Commons on the 6th December, 1923. This Parliament made English history for it gave Great Britain its first Socialist Cabinet.

This Parliamentary change was not without its significance for Eden's entrance into political life; he started his Parliamentary career in the benches of the opposition and so had more opportunity

to take part in debates than is usually given to a young back-bencher of the Government party.

The election had proved that Anthony Eden's serious opponent was not the Countess of Warwick, but the Liberal candidate, George Nichols. Through the dissolving of Parliament and the general elections the election campaign dragged for six whole weeks and the prospects of the Countess of Warwick faded more and more. The sensation of her nomination was spent; the voters increasingly felt the grotesque in the situation; they had no understanding for the fact that the Mistress of Warwick had chosen their constituency to represent the Socialist idea.

Twenty-five per cent of the voters went to the polls and Captain Eden, as he was still called, was elected with 16,337 votes against about 11,000 votes of Nichols. Lady Warwick polled only 4,015. After this failure she slowly withdrew from active politics, retaining, however, her interest in the Labour movement. The financial position of the Warwicks was also changed. In 1937 the Countess published an advertisement which caused great sensation, seeking for tenants in her house as she was unable to keep it up under the heavy burden of taxation. About a year later this interesting and talented woman died.

For Anthony Eden real life now began. As a young husband, a freshly-elected M.P., he moved

to London—to the city which became his constant domicile in the following decades.

Eden's entrance into politics coincided with the most agitated period of post-war England in the respect of home affairs. We must try to realise how much had happened in the short time between his failure in Spennymoor and his entering Parliament. During his first election campaign he was still a candidate of the National Coalition ; but soon the alliance of Conservatives and Liberals was broken and Bonar Law became head of the first purely Conservative Government of the post-war times. The great Conservative statesman was able to hold his position only for a short time ; his illness, threatening for a long time, overwhelmed and forced him to resign ; a few months later, just in the days of Eden's marriage, he died. His successor was Stanley Baldwin, the politician who played the greatest part in Eden's political rise. As a candidate at the election of Warwick-Leamington, Eden represented the Conservative majority of the Government ; but when he entered Parliament, this majority had turned into a minority and Eden found himself in the opposition. The opening of the first Parliament to which Eden belonged coincided with the Labour Party's coming to power and the forming of Great Britain's first Socialist Cabinet under MacDonald.

In the background of all these changes immense difficulties of home and foreign policy were hidden.

Peace could not be restored in Europe; the unfortunate peace treaties of Versailles were followed by the short-sighted oppressive French policy against the Germans which reached its peak in the fatal occupation of the Ruhr. The Governments of Great Britain, even if they did not wholly realise the consequences of these unjust measures against young German democracy, sensed that only difficulties could result. It was also against Great Britain's fundamental principles that any Power—and this Power, at that time, seemed to be France—should build up a hegemony on the European continent. But England did not possess the energy and the decisive strength effectively to oppose the French policy and thus, against her conviction, she became partly responsible for all that followed. The miserable muddle around the reception of Germany into the League of Nations and the blundering treatment of the question of reparations created a poisoned atmosphere in Europe. Its consequence was a general economic chaos which undermined most European currencies and retarded the work of rebuilding made so necessary by the World War. The effect of all these phenomena was felt greatly in England, too; the growth of unemployment paved the way for social restlessness which soon assumed dangerous forms. The peace conference of Lausanne with the new nationalistic Turkey had shown that Europe was still unripe for an understanding treatment of the controversies

between the nations. To master economic downfall and draw the economic unity of the British Empire into a firmer unity, Baldwin decided to turn away from the old Free Trade principles and introduce protection. But as he thought that he had not found the necessary backing for it in Parliament and especially in his own majority, he decided to fight a general election which, as many Conservatives sensed and even warned Baldwin, was destined to have disastrous consequences for Conservative majority. While in the former House of Commons, elected in 1922, the Conservatives had an absolute majority with 344 seats, in 1923 they returned with only 258 and thereby became a minority. Among the 258 was young Anthony Eden. One hundred and ninety-one Socialists and 159 Liberals now faced the Conservatives. Baldwin had hoped that the Liberals would not prevent his forming a cabinet. But immediately after the opening of Parliament his expectations were disappointed. The Liberals, under Asquith's leadership, had voted with the Socialists under MacDonald and defeated the Baldwin cabinet. The crisis took its constitutional way, King George V invited the leader of the biggest opposition party, Ramsay MacDonald, to form a Government. A wholly unusual situation arose, as fundamentally a cabinet of the minority was created while the numerically much stronger party, the Conservatives, had to take the part of the opposition.

Under such circumstances the twenty-five-year-old M.P., Anthony Eden, started his Parliamentary career. A more exciting beginning could not be imagined. There were many people in England for whom the Socialist Government meant the end of the world and the destruction of the whole social order of the country. But soon it was proved that the 'Socialist danger' would not be so threatening as these broad strata had imagined. MacDonald himself had entered the road to middle-class ideals and moderation which led him some years later to head a new National Coalition. His party did not want any revolutionary reforms and if they had planned anything of the kind they would have been prevented from it by the Liberals on whose support the Socialist Government depended. On the contrary it turned out that Labour had, especially in foreign affairs, a rather lucky hand; relations with Germany were improved, the authority of the League of Nations increased and the occupation of the Ruhr was ended.

It could be almost said that the Socialist Government worked, in many respects, on the basis later adopted by Anthony Eden's foreign policy. Eden himself was still far from seeing his conceptions clearly and his first Parliamentary experiments were not much more than the dutiful objections of a Conservative newcomer whose task it was to take part in the opposition.

This 'silent period' of the young M.P. was

comparatively not very long. After six weeks he felt sufficiently at home in the House of Commons to choose an important debate for the occasion of his maiden speech. Nothing proves more clearly the quick pace of our time than a review of the political situation fifteen years ago. As if a whole century divides the past and the present. England lived in a fury of disarmament; the will for this was so strong that even the Conservatives dared to oppose it only in a gentle, conciliatory way. If someone had talked about a German danger threatening Britain and London it would have sounded like a very bad joke. When the Conservatives demanded the building of some military planes, the reply was: What for? Against whom should we defend ourselves? Against our ally, France? Against Holland? Or Scandinavia? Germany was not mentioned even in this ironical manner. She did not possess a single warplane and it was thought that good care had been taken to prevent her building them for several generations. Anthony Eden, the slim M.P. with a bushy moustache, took part in this debate which to-day might sound like a musical comedy. The attack against the MacDonald cabinet and the accusation of neglecting armaments in the air was led by an outstanding personality of the Conservative Party, Sir Samuel Hoare. Thus the two names, linked together so strongly in the future—those of Hoare and Eden—met for the first time. Neither of them

would have dreamed that the shy young man would become in the not so distant future a successor of Sir Samuel as Foreign Secretary of Great Britain.

There is a certain fascination in looking back on the subject of this debate. Sir Samuel Hoare mentioned proudly that as Air Minister he had increased the number of Great Britain's ' first line ' planes to eighty and demanded that the Socialist Government continue the development of the Air Force. He said that five or six million pounds would suffice to ensure for a few years the building up of a modern air force of the country. But the Government found even this demand exaggerated; it represented the principle that in the new world which was being born there was no need of arms —only of the fact of representing just and noble causes. Nothing was more dangerous than preparedness for war—one had to prepare for peace. In order to emphasise the pacifist ideals, even the Bible was cited.

Anthony Eden entered the debate unostentatiously —the newspapers did not even mention him. With the usual formalities of *captatio benevolentiæ* he asked for the patience and understanding of the House of Commons. Then he said things which were very sensible in part, even if seen in the light of the present; but also others which are very unlike Anthony Eden of to-day. His words had a certain military note, the old soldier spoke

in him when he said, arousing the dislike of the majority: "Attack is the best form of defence."

He was able to add something essential to later debates which had more to do with foreign policy and in the first place were closer to his own circle of interests. Once he spoke about a special Persian problem; then, at another time, about the Lausanne Treaty with Turkey. Especially this second speech caused attention. Not so much on account of Eden's oratorical talents which were neither then nor later outstanding—as by the expert knowledge and the wide horizon hidden behind the words of the young M.P. As an orator Eden always lacked spontaneity. Only seldom was he able to carry away his listeners. He always delivered his speeches fluently and in faultless form, but the dynamic power denoting the really great orator was lacking in him. Sometimes one noticed the careful preparation which seemed to make the choice of his words affected, as he selected much too literary phraseology alien to the general use. But in these years nobody would have found an analysis of the style of Eden's speeches worth bothering about. But his foresight was shown in these first speeches; for instance, he recognised rightly that the controversy between Kemal Pasha's Turkey and Great Britain could not be lasting and that the interests of the two countries demanded the building up of extremely friendly relations.

There is no means of telling when Stanley Baldwin

first noticed the member for Warwick and Leamington; it is alleged that he once said this young man would become his Foreign Secretary. Perhaps this prophecy was created only after the event just as that of the Oxford professor. But it is certain that, already in the first months Anthony Eden had proved himself a very useful Member of Parliament. The Conservative Party had not very many young followers and even less young politicians who possessed an expert knowledge equalling Eden's. If things should change again and the Conservatives return to power, he was destined for a considerable future.

This change came very quickly. The Conservatives were right in fearing a stabilisation of the Labour Government, which could prepare a Socialist evolution of England; this had to be prevented. The opposition of Conservative circles became especially strong when the Labour Government took the daring step of trying to create normal diplomatic and economic relations with the hated and outlawed Soviet Russia. Such an alliance with the 'devil' was an unbearable thought for the Tories. They believed that such connections with Bolshevism could not remain without changes in home policy. To foil these consequences the Government had to be brought to a fall as quickly as possible. Anthony Eden was just as indignant about the Anglo-Russian treaty as were his party colleagues. He was especially agitated that a

Soviet Commissar called Maxim Litvinoff was added to the Anglo-Russian commission which worked to build up the relations between the two countries. With other members who posed unpleasant questions, Anthony Eden also tried to compromise this Litvinoff and thereby prove the impossibility of normal discussion with Russia. "Does the Government know that Mr. Litvinoff was expelled from Sweden and Denmark in 1919?"

About a decade later Anthony Eden was a guest in Moscow of the same Litvinoff with whom he actively co-operated through many years in the League of Nations.

The MacDonald Cabinet fell through a comparatively small incident. It was all about a secondary effect of Communist propaganda in England; the criminal process against a Communist journalist was quashed. MacDonald decided to dissolve Parliament and face new elections.

The Conservatives again nominated Anthony Eden for Warwick-Leamington, the constituency which has remained loyal to him to the present day. The prospects were rather uncertain; as we have said already, Labour could look back on a rather successful period of activity; but it could not be foreseen how the middle-class voters of the Liberals would react to the fact that their party had helped the 'Reds' to gain power. The election campaign, however, was settled beforehand by the notorious Zinoviev letter. All that

is connected with this letter is still mysterious. It was alleged that the letter came into the possession of the Foreign Office and from there in some equally mysterious way to the editorial office of the *Daily Mail* which published it five days before the general elections. The leaders of the Communist International, *i.e.*, of an organisation which was closely connected with the Soviet Government (the same government which had recently made a treaty with Great Britain), had demanded in this letter that the British Communist Party start a revolt in England; incite the army and the fleet to rebellion; provoke riots in Ireland and urge the coloured people of the colonies to rise up against British domination.

The Soviet branded the letter as a forgery; nothing certain is known about it even to the present day. Forgery or not, its effects could not be remedied. The Socialists had lost their fight before they started it. The Conservatives had a weapon in their hands which must have had the greatest influence on middle-class circles. The defeat was much more shattering for the Liberals than for Labour; they were made responsible for giving their help to the treaty with the Soviet—the self-same Soviet which wanted to destroy Great Britain's well-established order by revolution.

The elections were called by political history the Zinoviev elections. In 1924 Eden had no Socialist opponent in Warwick-Leamington; only his old

'enemy,' the Liberal George Nichols, contested the seat. As in the case of all the candidates of the Conservative Party, Anthony Eden's election campaign was based mostly on the attack against the Anglo-Russian treaty. His victory was easier than the first time; he was elected with a majority of seven thousand votes. The Conservatives had attained their greatest electoral triumph. Labour was greatly weakened, the Liberals almost annihilated; they have never recovered from this defeat. Four hundred and twelve Conservatives were faced by only 151 Socialists and 40 Liberals.

This Parliament, sitting from 1924 to 1929, created the foundations for Anthony Eden's political ascent. As the public became interested in his person only much later, the legend arose that he had appeared on Great Britain's political sky like a comet. In reality Eden had to ascend the steps of his career just like anyone else; if we concede that when, comparatively young, he became one of the leading statesmen of his country, it must not be forgotten how early he entered Parliament. Eight years passed between his entrance into politics and his first ministerial post. It was said that Eden had been 'made' by Stanley Baldwin—according to others by Sir Austen Chamberlain. So much is sure that both of these great politicians had a decisive part in the process by which one of the youngest members of their party became within a few years an influential member of the

Government; but Eden's 'discovery' is due to someone who has been unjustly forgotten in this respect — Commander Oliver Locker Lampson. Locker Lampson, M.P., had been sitting for thirteen years in Parliament when Eden entered it; he was Eden's senior by fifteen years. But soon after Eden's election a bond of sincere friendship grew up between the two men. Eden had in truth always more contact with the older generation than with youth; his whole character, his reserve, his self-discipline drew him to these men who belonged to a senior generation. He had several points in common with Locker Lampson. This experienced politician had a similar distinguished war record as Eden himself and he was just as little 'insular' as his younger colleague. Even if Eden's great travels followed only later, he had used his student's years to see something of the world—one holiday he used to take a trip to Eastern Europe—and Locker Lampson was one of the most widely-travelled members of the House of Commons. But for Eden's development the fact that Commander Locker Lampson belonged to one of the most liberal and progressive Conservative politicians must have been even more important; in the future years he was to be a sponsor of all persecuted people, especially the maltreated Jews of Central Europe. A sharing of opinions and convictions must have been present already in 1925 when Locker Lampson made Anthony M.P. his Parliamentary private secretary.

Locker Lampson had become Under State Secretary of the Home Office and so Anthony was taken away for some time from his real field of interest—foreign policy. Anthony Eden's life might have taken perhaps quite a different turn if Locker Lampson—a few months after he had appointed Eden his Parliamentary private secretary—had not been transferred to the Foreign Office. Thereby began Eden's connection with the same State department, which was broken only for two years up to 1938 when he resigned his position. These two years were filled by the régime of another Labour Government.

Through Locker Lampson's help Anthony ascended one more step. When Locker Lampson's chief, Austen Chamberlain, was looking for a Parliamentary private secretary, the former advised him to choose Anthony Eden. And so Eden was able to spend his 'learning years' of foreign politics at the side of Chamberlain, whose pupil he has remained to a certain extent to the present day.

But Baldwin's attention was also directed to the young member of his party. Probably he did not see in Eden anything but the hopeful, ambitious and talented young politician, and the son-in-law of his friend, Sir Gervase Beckett. So much is certain—when, in 1935, Eden's first and up to now only book was published under the title *Places in the Sun*, Prime Minister Baldwin honoured the author by writing a preface to his first literary work.

Relations between Baldwin and Eden became closer with the passing of years. If Eden had every reason to be grateful for the goodwill and support of his party chiefs, there was no one who gave so much loyalty and sacrifice for Baldwin; even in situations which might harm his own popularity.

There is a fine and romantic theory about the connection of these two men who in age are separated by three decades. It is said that Baldwin saw in Anthony Eden his political 'foster-son' and Eden's faithful co-operation compensated him for not being able to rely on his own son. Oliver Baldwin and Anthony Eden are about the same age, but Oliver chose a path which—at least politically—had to alienate him from his father. He joined the Labour Party and as Socialist candidate often opposed the followers of Stanley Baldwin. Knowing the strength of the system of political dynasties in England, the tradition of sons following in the footsteps of their fathers, it is easy to understand how deeply Oliver Baldwin's denial of his father's political heritage must have grieved the leader of the Conservative Party. In Anthony Eden he found what he had hoped and expected in his son. Nobody could prove whether this was really so, but the close warmth and cordiality of Eden's and Baldwin's relations survived all political storms. And if Anthony Eden sets his feet now, after his breaking with Chamberlain's Government, on new paths, it is still alleged, with more or less justification,

that he is supported by Stanley Baldwin's fatherly advice.

The book *Places in the Sun* was the result of a long trip which led Eden through half the British Empire. The young politician had shown early inclination for literature. Under a pen-name he had written political glossaries for the *Yorkshire Post* and (unknown by any of his fellow-members at that time) reports on London art exhibitions. The latter Eden himself would not consider to-day as masterpieces of journalism; they were very cultured, but a little dry and lengthy essays of a well-educated and sensitive *dilettante*.

Places in the Sun would also not secure a place in the history of literature. Descriptions lack unity and the animating power which make the real author. Phrases of a sober guide-book alternate with not very original and lyrical outpourings and arguments of international politics. Anthony Eden's biographer, Allan Campbell Johnson, says that the staff of the *Yorkshire Post* was partly indignant when their paper sent the 'amateur' Anthony Eden to the Imperial Press Conference when a great many outstanding collaborators of the paper would have been glad of such a commission.

Enough to say that Anthony Eden asked for a few months' leave from Parliament and went to Australia representing his father-in-law's paper. He used this trip to get acquainted with the overseas

parts of the British Empire. Canada, New Zealand, Fiji and Ceylon were included in his itinerary beside Australia ; a short detour took him also to Hawaii.

Even if the little book is almost forgotten to-day, it is still worth attention from the point of Eden's later importance. He expresses a number of thoughts in it which seem to be more than justified to-day. "Let it be said, and with emphasis, that it is impossible to visit Australia or New Zealand or any other Dominion, without being deeply impressed by the need for a closer co-operation in our Imperial foreign policy. The need becomes every day more apparent. The affairs of Europe are our pre-occupation, those of the Pacific are Australia's, those of Suez and of Singapore must engage us both jointly and continuously with the other partners in our Imperial heritage. The mechanism of closer co-ordination may be difficult to evolve ; the form is of less importance than the substance."

This brilliantly formulated demand of a trip more rich in spiritual than in outward experiences is at the same time an unintentional reply to all those who accused Eden later of having a Continental outlook and insufficient understanding of the special interests of the Empire.

Eden brought back from his trip which took him over the British Empire not only the personal impression of the greatness of this Empire, but also the conviction that the power embodied by this gigantic building of states implies certain duties.

In many of his speeches he proved himself a sympathetic well-informed expert of the demands of the Dominions and Colonies—for instance, soon after his return, he delivered some speeches showing considerable foresight about the settlement of the Dominions—but nothing was further from him than the idea of isolation which he considered at the same time impossible and unworthy.

CHAPTER V

A GREAT IDEAL

Soon after his return from Australia he started his work by the side of Austen Chamberlain. To understand the Eden of later years, we must know that the beginnings of his foreign policy activity coincided with the much too short-lived period of glory of the League-of-Nation's evolution and of European co-operation. At Chamberlain's side he saw how an understanding of Great Powers could be brought into harmony with the more universal principles of the League and how strongly Geneva had become a focus of European politics; or perhaps it could have become such a focus and acme if hesitancy, shortsightedness, tactical and psychological blunders had not prevented it.

There were still arguments at this time as to whether the Locarno Pact—which sounds to-day like a fairy-tale of distant ages—could be in harmony with the dogmatic principles of the League; how far an Anglo-French co-operation would harm or help the League; but only very few dared to doubt the significance of the Geneva institution.

Some politicians overestimated, others wanted to limit its authority, but on the whole Geneva was the great hope for the reorganisation of the world. Eden himself was not among those who saw in the League a world court of justice with unlimited powers. He had always believed in it, but nothing was farther from him than to cling to it like a fanatic. He expressed his attitude clearly during a debate on foreign affairs :

"For my part I never expected that in its earliest years the League would be called upon to give heaven-sent judgments, to formulate impeccable decisions. That is to ask too much. What I had hoped of the League, and do hope still, is that its greatest benefit will be by the opportunities it will create for statesmen of different nationalities to meet and exchange those opinions. To expect the League to change human nature in a year or two was an extravagant expectation. You will not change by one instrument or in one day the passions of nations. It must take time. Far more harm has been done to the League by people with their heads in the clouds and their brains in their slippers than by the most inveterate enemy the League ever had."

Neither Eden's limited hopes nor the more ambitious desires of the extreme followers of the League were fulfilled. A real pacification of Europe was prevented first by the unmanageability of the French nationalists, intoxicated by their victory ;

and later, when a government of the Left in France would have been prepared to engineer a reorganisation of Europe on a sounder basis, the endless muddle of disarmament followed; and here Great Britain proved the biggest obstacle for the realisation of the grandest but most unsuccessful project of post-war years.

We are not writing a history of this period and therefore cannot describe individually the events of these years which had been passing outwardly under the sign of a newly-won balance of foreign relations; but through its sterile discussions, always postponed solutions, futile conferences bearing in itself the seeds of a European tragedy. Eden in these years represented the opinions of the party to which he belonged and those of his chief to whom he was devoted. It is difficult to judge whether he recognised some dangers or not; whether he would have acted in many ways differently from those who were his political paragons; but who could have expected of a young politician that he should try and steer things in a different channel?

His first personal contact with the League at Geneva was made in 1928 when, without any special commission, he accompanied the Under State Secretary Locker Lampson to the autumn session. Thus he had the opportunity to study the procedure and method of work of the League quite closely without taking part actively in it. Perhaps he had

not suspected himself that his name would be fatally coupled with the League; that its triumphs would become his greatest successes; that the failure of the League would bring about his own fall. After his return from Geneva he was given the opportunity to have the word even in the most important debates as spokesman of the Government; his personal importance in the House of Commons increased almost monthly. Although his speeches mirrored the general attitude of the Government, his formulation was his own and gave important pointers about his political beliefs.

At that time Lloyd George was the greatest opponent of a close co-operation between Great Britain and France; he saw in it a danger for the pacification of Europe. But Eden replied that the solidity of Anglo-French relations represented the unavoidable basis of Europe's peace—not only to-day but in the future. This friendship assures the strength of the League; only thus could an approach to Germany be made possible.

It is on the whole interesting to observe how Eden, in the years of his Parliamentary secretaryship of Austen Chamberlain, was Lloyd George's most marked opponent. Naturally there were no personal reasons; it was a consequence of Eden's close connection with Sir Austen Chamberlain and Baldwin who both served as butts for Lloyd George's embittered criticism. When Eden for the first time

sent a letter to *The Times*, he argued, in a vehement way unusual for him, with Lloyd George.

Eden became more and more interested in foreign affairs ; it was said later with some justification that he became too alienated from the internal problems of the country. He had nothing to say either about the dramatic events of the big general strike nor to the famous Prayer Book debate in 1927–28.

Thus the year of the new general elections, 1929, arrived ; the Conservatives, certain of their triumph, did not oppose the excellent propaganda of the Labour Party (based mostly on the blunders of foreign policy in the past years and the growing unemployment) with the necessary preparation. The result was a strong increase of Socialist votes and a constellation of parties in the House of Commons leading to MacDonald's second Labour Government. Eden was not only untouched by the turn of events but his position in his constituency was strengthened.

He was now for the second time in his political career a member of the opposition. Outwardly this meant a retarding of his career ; but in reality the two years of Socialist régime helped his ascent. During this time he became the chief speaker of the Conservatives on foreign affairs. He gave himself with an immense industry to Parliamentary work ; by long and short speeches, questions and objections, he fulfilled the opposition duty of control and warning. He found himself often in controversy

with the Socialist Foreign Secretary Henderson about the question of the co-operation with Russia, but his criticism had no longer the same sharp tone as formerly when he fought against the Anglo-Russian treaty. It is interesting to note the attitude he took towards a problem which had become very much discussed recently but had nothing to do with his real field of activity, foreign affairs—about the question of capital punishment. Eden did not adopt Liberal principles—he sponsored the demand that capital punishment should be retained in English law. The question of Manchukuo was discussed for the first time in Parliament which, in its later developments, gave the real mortal blow to the prestige of the League. Two years afterwards Eden, as Under State Secretary of the Foreign Office, had to defend Great Britain's hesitating policy in face of the Japanese attack; but when he dealt with the Manchukuo question still as a member of the opposition, he described Soviet Russia and not Japan as the threatening power in the Far East. When he demanded for the first time that the Covenant of the League should be used against an aggressor state (which demand he repeated later under much more tragic circumstances) it was against Soviet Russia he wanted to use it—a country which was not a member of the League.

The increasing economic crisis forced the problems of foreign policy into the background. It achieved a complete reorganisation of English political life

and was decisive for Eden's future. The chaotic consequences of economic depression accelerated the fall of the second Labour Government and in its place a new formation was born, the cabinet of National Coalition which was created—under the leadership of MacDonald who left the Labour Party—of Conservatives, Liberals and former Socialists. In order to put his immense prestige at the service of national unity, the Foreign Office was taken over by the Liberal Lord Reading; but a really active work could not be expected any longer from the aged statesman. Therefore the appointment of Under State Secretary of the Foreign Office received a special significance and it caused hardly any surprise when, on Baldwin's advice, MacDonald chose Anthony Eden for this post. It forms part of the 'Legend of Eden' that he was completely unprepared for his appointment; far from the turmoil of politics it is said that he was painting water colours in Yorkshire, following his still unsuppressed artistic leanings. Now Eden was really in Yorkshire and it may be that he was painting a little—but we could hardly suppose that his appointment came to him as a shock. His first 'discoverer,' Locker Lampson, had already emphasised the immense ambition of the young politician and his great activity in the opposition showed how consciously he was preparing his way to Downing Street. His appointment was fully justified and proved Baldwin's high opinion of

his young follower. Stanley Baldwin, who entered the House of Commons at the age of forty-one and only at fifty became Parliamentary private secretary to Bonar Law, was fundamentally no friend of a too rapid political career and over-cautious in the case of youth. He had made an exception only of two men: one of them MacDonald's son, young Malcolm, and the other his loyal pupil, Anthony Eden. He had no reason to fear that the latter, through impetuous youth, was to bring restlessness into the Foreign Office; we have alluded already to the fact that Eden had never really been a representative of youth; right from the beginning of his political activity he had embodied in his appearance, in his reserve, in his conciliatory diplomatic manner in spite of his youth, the characteristics of an experienced politician.

The Marquess of Reading held the Foreign Secretaryship only a few months; he was followed by another representative of the Liberal Party, Sir John Simon, who held office from 1931 to 1935. This change did not affect Anthony Eden's position; the next general elections even strengthened it. He had an outstanding part in the overwhelming triumph of his party in 1931. Out of 615 constituencies the Conservatives held 470, a further 48 were gained by the allied Liberal-Nationals and the National Workers' Party of MacDonald. The Socialists were reduced to 52 seats. While in 1929 Eden had a Liberal and a Socialist opponent who

together polled more votes than he did, in 1931 the Liberal candidate retired so that Eden had only to reckon with a Socialist opponent. He almost doubled his votes—almost thirty-nine thousand, while the Labour candidate Garton polled only nine thousand. This immense majority was remarkable even in the high tide of Conservative victories and added to Eden's prestige both in Parliament and in public life.

The public took cognisance of Eden's personality only after 1931; that is perhaps the reason why his 'rise' is considered to be phenomenal. Up to that time he had not a very good Press and, apart from the Parliamentary reports of *The Times* and a few laudatory remarks of the same newspaper, his name was hardly mentioned. But now it was to become quite different. Not so much through his activity in Parliament as through his part in the League, Eden became a closely watched and for the public a highly-interesting figure. Gradually he was entrusted with the task of liaison officer between London and Geneva; in the following years continuous trips between the British capital and the city of the League gave a special note to his work.

Now the world Press began to give him attention; they started to talk about this new star on the political horizon of Europe. Eden's prepossessing appearance, his elegance, his charm, were talked about; slowly it led to exaggerated admiration. No wonder that Eden caused a sensation with his

physical qualities; post-war Europe was unused to such a type of politician. Who were the men whose pictures the newspapers had published up to now? The soberly middle-class figure of the unfortunate Dr. Stresemann; the comfortably, untidy, plump Briand in his unpressed suits; the sympathetic but uninteresting Philip Henderson; the strong, old-fashioned dignity of Austen Chamberlain with his eye-glass and all the great men from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe: little lively Benes, Titulescu who looked like a eunuch, and many others who were, in part, certainly great statesmen, most skilful diplomats, successful representatives of their countries—but without 'sex appeal.' And now the slim, well-built Eden appeared with his clean-cut features, his faultless clothes, his charming smile—he looked like the embodiment of an ideal male. In reality Eden is no exceptional phenomenon among Englishmen, in spite of all these undeniable qualities of his. Among the graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, among the officers of the Guards, in the distinguished clubs of Pall Mall and St. James's Street, one can see dozens of a similar type walking through life unnoticed. Eden's political significance formed the background for the admiration of his personable appearance; on the other hand, it helped his political popularity to achieve such a fantastic extent. So much is certain that it was not to the liking of this serious and rather shy young man to

be admired like a film star. Nothing was farther from him than to adopt the attitude of a matinee idol; on the contrary, it is said that he often complained in the company of friends about the silly gossip of his alleged 'triumphant elegance.' This elegance itself is not so overwhelming that its legend can be justified and the Americans were rather disappointed when Eden went at the end of 1938 to the United States and failed to look like a tailor's dummy; he wore a rather shabby, comfortable overcoat. But we have to state—without giving too much importance to such outward things—that Anthony Eden is really an outstandingly fine figure in tails or in the white sports suit of the tennis grounds or in his black hat, hurrying to the House of Commons or to an international conference; there is hardly anyone like him in the world of big politics.

With Eden's hat and his whole elegance the English were in about the same position as with Chamberlain's umbrella; they discovered it only through the admiration of foreign countries.

The international problems which kept Anthony Eden as Under State Secretary and Geneva representative of Great Britain took a turn for the worse. In consequence of the discord among the Great Powers the League was unable to prevent the annexation of Manchukuo by Japan. Eden had often the sad task of replying to questions in Parliament and giving explanations which were soon

flagrantly refuted by subsequent events. So, for instance, the Government had 'no information' that the Japanese wanted to found an independent state in Manchukuo; or the Japanese Government had given reassurance to England that they considered the obligations of the nine-power pact binding even in the future and would uphold the policy of the 'open door' in Manchukuo. While such and similar reassuring declarations were made, the League failed and Japan was able to realise her plans unchecked. The first application of force by a Great Power on a weaker country had succeeded; a precedent was created and its fatal consequences can be felt up to the present day.

The relations of the European powers deteriorated more and more through the tragic chaos of the treatment of disarmament and reparation questions. This is not the place to go into the details of this long muddle; the less reason for doing so as all the stillborn plans, foiled compromises, unfulfilled hopes, have only an historical interest to-day; but their consequences are shown in the situation which keeps Europe to-day under the constant pressure of the threat of war. The originally weak German democracy was undermined from inside; it had been sentenced to death by the futility of its foreign policy and from its ruins Adolf Hitler's Third Reich was born.

If Eden should ever decide to write his memories, we shall know more about the strife which must

have gone on at this time inside the British Cabinet. Eden himself was more and more captivated by the spirit of the League. He had always very sober views, free from any exaggeration, about the practical possibilities of this institution ; in Geneva he learned from personal experience what a precious instrument the League was if it was given the necessary opportunities ; and even more what an efficient instrument it could have become. The politicians of the smaller states, Benes, Titulescu, Politis, Madariaga, who hoped from the League the salvation and security of their countries, created a relation of trust with the young British statesman who was much more sensitive and sympathetic to their arguments than the older representatives of the Great Powers. On the other hand, Eden recognised the advantage of international co-operation ; he developed into a more and more enthusiastic follower of the idea of the League and that of collective security. His speeches testify now and then to this inner evolution while he had to represent dutifully the views of his Government. But the choice of his words, the formulation of his thoughts, showed slowly that he was trying to save the ideals of international justice from the European chaos. But in the first place he was loyal to the duties which his position set him and in defending MacDonald's foreign policy in Parliament he had a strong dispute with Winston Churchill, who had forestalled him in the negation of the

methods in British foreign policy. A number of years were to pass before the paths of these two men crossed and Eden became in the eyes of the old fighter Churchill the biggest and perhaps only hope of Great Britain.

Eden's activity in the League and his speeches in the House of Commons convinced Baldwin that he had been extremely fortunate in his choice. This young politician remained loyal to the Conservative flag and yet he seemed to be able to awaken trust and sympathy even in those circles which were far from the Tory camp. His unselfish work in the League gained him not only an international reputation, but also brought him the confidence of the great masses which, united in different organisations, especially in the League of Nations Union, followed the ideals of the League in Britain. We have already spoken at some length about Baldwin's personal friendship for Eden; he must have been especially glad to make one of his youngest collaborators the recipient of an outstanding honour. In 1934, at the occasion of the New Year Honours, Anthony Eden became Lord Privy Seal. This office is one of the oldest in Britain, but its real duties were already obliterated in 1884, so that there is no special field of activity connected with the title. It corresponds to a ministerial post without portfolio; its bearer is mostly entrusted with special tasks. Eden's predecessors as Lords of the Privy Seal were men like the Earl of Curzon,

Bonar Law, Austen Chamberlain, Lord Robert Cecil, Clynes, Marquess of Salisbury and the Earl of Peel. This ministerial post is mostly connected with a seat in the Cabinet, but Eden was apparently found too young for that or perhaps the jealousy of his older colleagues had a certain effect.

Eden's importance at this time was not yet so firmly established that his appointment would have caused any attention either in Britain or abroad. There was a certain feeling of satisfaction at home; only the followers of isolation had a few derogatory remarks to make; while in Germany it was supposed that he would have a decisive position in foreign policy questions and he was received with a certain amount of sympathy. The *Angriff* said: "After all, he belongs to a generation whose life and conceptions have been formed and moulded by the war." Eden himself had made an important confession shortly before his appointment during a speech delivered at a by-election; in the future this became almost his guiding star:

"We could not avoid another war simply by saying that in no circumstances would we go to the aid of a power unjustly attacked. Great Britain is a great power with the responsibilities of a great power and if we fail to discharge them we will invite the disaster which will follow."

CHAPTER VI

AMBASSADOR AT LARGE

If anyone, Eden felt this responsibility of his country. An immensely exhausting, restless time began for him; a period of rushing across Europe from state to state, from capital to capital. He became the most travelled English statesman and his wife was nicknamed 'the diplomatic widow.' Eden could really give hardly any time to his family; his two sons, Simon Gascoign, born 1925, and Nicholas, born 1930, had scarcely seen their father. For Eden, who clings passionately to his family and is more proud of his sons than of anything else, this sacrificing of family life must have meant a great self-denial.

But the task which he set himself overshadowed all other considerations. One of the most frequent pictures in the newspapers was of Eden, with his brief case under his arm and a few newspapers in his hand, saying good-bye to his wife on the railway station or at an air field. The political backgrounds and actual goals of these trips were different, but their essence fundamentally the same: the search for peace. . . .

Between these more and more frequent trips to Continental capitals there were the long periods at Geneva, where Eden sometimes spent two or three months at the different conferences. When, a few years later, he became Foreign Secretary, William Barclay, the political correspondent of *The Daily Express*, had some justification in his humorous article: that he hardly knew anything about him. "Eden," he said, "never goes to the House of Commons; I never go to Geneva, so we just can't meet. I never go to Prague, Warsaw, Moscow, Rome, Paris or Waikiki while he is continuously at one of these places."

This article shows also that the isolationists had looked with disfavour on Eden's constant peregrinations on the European continent. In the same circles his intensive activity in the League found much opposition. About that time they started to call the Geneva gathering 'the garden of Eden.' But with the majority of the English public, just as abroad, this almost unceasing travel and work of Eden had heightened his prestige. It was known that he undertook these trips as representative of the whole Cabinet, but his personal initiative was felt behind it. His untiring striving for Europe's peace slowly changed the interest which people felt for this unusual British statesman into real affection. Yes, Eden became the rare statesman, loved far beyond the frontiers of Great Britain. His popularity became immense, especially in the

smaller countries. In Scandinavia, on the Balkan, in Hungary, he became an ideal, and at the same time it was increasingly felt that this statesman, possessed by his task, was something different from the much too tactical, careful, hesitating politicians of the older generation ; that this man had—ideals.

This recognition was the more remarkable as Eden himself never expressed a separate opinion in public. He exposed himself unreservedly for the foreign policy of his Government, even if in the secret of his soul he often had a different opinion. Neither Sir John Simon, for years his chief at the Foreign Office, nor his successor, Sir Samuel Hoare, could reproach Eden a single time with a breach of solidarity or discipline. He covered the intentions and actions of his superiors so much that he risked his own reputation. Looking back to these years, one has to ask whether this loyalty was not exaggerated ; whether Eden would not have done better by drawing a line between the methods which he clearly recognised as harmful and his own aims which he could not realise in consequence of the constant compromises. Perhaps he would have been able to change things by passionate revolt when it was not yet too late. But nobody can be expected to pass beyond the limitations of his own nature. Eden was not made for rebellion. He became ready for an argument with the Government only when his plans were made completely impossible by a constant opposition and crossing.

And even when he had reached this point, he not only did not exploit the propagandistic possibilities of his decision, but—causing great disappointment—he tried to weaken and neutralise it as far as it was humanly possible.

We may suppose that Eden had undertaken already his first Continental trips with certain premises, but it is not at all evident how far these trips added essentially to the formation of his conceptions. He had become personally acquainted with the European statesmen, studied the situation of different countries through his own experiences—and so he was able to recognise the threatening dangers much better than the politicians who were sitting in London or who travelled only seldom; without the susceptibility of youth which made the thirty-seven-year-old politician much more open-minded to any impression than his older colleagues.

Eden's first trip was connected with a new disarmament plan of Great Britain for which he wanted to gain assent in Berlin, Paris and Rome. Looking back from our present perspective, it is especially interesting that he found the strongest contact and perhaps the best reception in—Berlin. For Adolf Hitler, Anthony Eden's arrival in the capital of the Reich represented an important event of the German Fuehrer's life. For the first time he came into direct contact with a representative of the Western Powers; for the first time

they sent to him a responsible statesman from the Western Democracies. Perhaps all this helped to make him show himself from his best side. Then again, these two belonged almost to the same generation, even if Hitler was several years older ; but the German dictator, who emphasised so often the comradeship of the front lines, was willing to recognise in his guest the foreign ex-service man. The Press of the world was able to state with a pleasant surprise and a little amazement that these two utterly different men had apparently found a path to each other, and in consequence of this personal understanding the Berlin discussions took such a favourable turn that they were prolonged to cover the whole programme.

It is very tempting to put the question how Europe's history would have developed if Mussolini had been able to approach Eden as closely as Hitler had done at the time of the first Berlin visit. Without overestimating the significance of such personal motives, we can say that almost from the first moment there was a fatal antipathy between the Duce and Eden. Their first meeting happened at a highly unpropitious moment ; Mussolini, already calculating his imperialistic aims, felt a growing distrust of his former ally and observed with a nervous uncertainty the evolution of the more recent dictatorship in the Third Reich. Surrounded by great plans and great anxieties, Mussolini had no understanding for Eden's task, and the Duce's

abrupt, unreserved manner shocked the sensitive, reserved Englishman. It is reserved for the future to discover the exact truth of what happened during the several encounters of Eden and Mussolini; but we contemporaries have already a certain idea that these discussions repeatedly took an unfavourable turn; and if we know the importance of subjective feelings in the oversensitive dictators, we can safely suppose that personal antipathy had a great part in Mussolini's direct hate with which he followed Eden's political activity. As for Eden, it is told that after a meeting with Mussolini he rushed to the hotel and shouted at his valet: "Start packing, we are leaving!" "But . . ." objected the manservant who had prepared for a longer stay. "I said pack!" interrupted Eden, and a few hours later he left Rome. This may or may not be true. So much is certain that already on the occasion of Eden's first trip to Rome unpleasant sensation was caused when Mussolini did not appear at the dinner which was arranged for the British guest, leaving the duties of the host to his State Secretary Suvich.

Apart from the unfavourable experiences in Rome, Eden's 'disarmament trip' was foiled also by the lack of understanding which the British plans encountered in Paris. Barthou, the Foreign Secretary, one of the most talented but also the most stubborn representative of French imperialism, dreamed at that time of encircling Germany and

was unable to lend a willing ear to the conciliatory propositions of Great Britain. The attitude of the dictator states became more and more threatening. Japan continued her aggression in Manchukuo. And in the British policy the impossibility of 'double orientation' was shown more and more clearly, although it was still retained for some time. Sir John Simon and Eden were as far from each other in their views as possible, but officially Eden had to follow the Foreign Secretary. But outside of Parliament he had already raised the battle-cry which he was to repeat so often: "There is an urgent necessity to unite the democracies if their ideals should be defended against the attack of the totalitarian states."

Through this speech many discovered—suspecting it already from Eden's actions—that this young statesman had become a from loyal follower of his party a vanguard of democratic ideals. This belief was strengthened when in the late summer of 1934 he made another trip to the Continent which might have had less political significance but produced even more lasting events in moral and psychological connections. This trip seemed to be a step for the uniting of the democracies as it took him to the most trusted democratic parts of Europe and Scandinavia. In Sweden and Denmark Eden had the greatest personal success and acquired lasting sympathies both in Parliamentary circles and among the general public. This visit of friendship

to the democratic powers of the north became a demonstration against the imperialistic policy of the world and created new hopes for international co-operation.

In his own field Eden proved that such co-operation can bear important fruit. In the years of 1934–35, the League was dominated by him as mediator, adviser and leader (through him Great Britain had been taking the initiative of the League for some time). He had to master the most difficult situations and success followed success. Unfortunately all these were only partial achievements, being able to solve the momentary conflicts without retarding the threatening European crisis. The brilliantly organised international safeguards of the Saar plebiscite which probably supplied the strongest proof for the little used possibilities of the League demonstrated that understanding and international co-operation could remedy many faults committed by the peace treaties and were able to manage even such critical situations. Eden had an eminent part in the preparation and organisation of the Saar plebiscite. When the Saar district returned without any important shock to the German Reich and Hitler solemnly declared that hereby all territorial demands of Germany were satisfied for all times, the whole world was relieved—even if only for a few months.

It was Eden's achievement when the League averted an even more acute danger of war. The

royal assassination in Marseilles when King Alexander of Jugoslavia and Barthou, the French Foreign Secretary were killed, caused a tension between Jugoslavia and Hungary which might have led any moment to an explosion; it also impaired the relations of Jugoslavia and Italy in a most threatening manner. The Jugoslavs raised the accusation that the plotters of this terrible double murder were in Hungary and Italy. The Hungarian Government was accused of having direct knowledge of the assassination. Luckily both the accuser and the 'defendants' declared their readiness to submit their sharp conflict to the League. The subsequent discussions before the League Council seemed to increase the danger even more and foreshadowed a general European conflict. The powers in Geneva were near to splitting up into enemy camps. It was in the first place, almost exclusively through Eden's efforts that this was avoided. In the treatment of his unfortunate affair he more than proved his diplomatic mastery and his understanding sympathy for the feelings and sensibilities of the different countries. A conflict which, before the foundation of the League, would certainly have led to war, was settled after the initial difficulties were removed, by resolutions satisfying all parties. Jugoslavia and Hungary, on the verge of war, after their relations were restored to normal, found the way to a neighbourly, friendly cohabitation.

Eden's international prestige became an immense asset for the whole world. Jugoslavia and Hungary were equally grateful to him. And this was no single case; in the following weeks he had to deal with several serious international crises. He mediated between Bolivia and Paraguay; he was busy with affairs of Persia and Finland; he it was who drew up the report on the highly complicated and unpleasant problem of Danzig. Even if he could not always force final solutions, his activity was always followed by a certain relaxation and the parties concerned in the dispute could not withhold their satisfaction from their impartial judge. There was a time when it seemed that the League might really develop into a world court of justice and it was presided over by the British politician, Anthony Eden, still on the right side of forty.

But as we have said, these successes could cover only temporarily the real reasons of European insecurity. Germany had left the League some time before and Hitler started to tear up the Treaty of Versailles, bit by bit. After the final fiasco of the Disarmament Conference, Germany cared little about the opinion of the Western Powers and of the League, she showed her intention of becoming a great military power—even more so than before the war—more or less clearly. The German air force which had been existing secretly for some considerable time, was now developed quite openly and the compulsory military service—which had also been

introduced in the face of the helpless endurance of the Western Powers—was lifted from behind the hardly masked secrecy and defiantly presented to the world as an immutable institution of the German Reich.

It was again recognised in London—and again too late—that matters could not go on in this way. It was hoped that by contacting Adolf Hitler again to lessen the tension. Sir John Simon and Anthony Eden were sent to Berlin.

This trip was a failure. Not on one single question could an agreement be reached with Germany; the result was so meagre that—as seldom happens after conferences among politicians—it was even admitted. Simon, after his return to London, talked about "considerable differences which were shown between the conceptions of the two Governments during the Berlin discussions." Perhaps it was the fault of Sir John Simon's cold and rather cynical personality that this time there was no personal contact in Berlin. There could be no bridge between Hitler and this too clever lawyer-politician who was trained by decades of political experience. This time Eden played the part of an observant listener at the discussions; but the conclusions he formed from his experiences forced him to become more suspicious towards the plans of the Third Reich. This was the second and probably the last meeting of Hitler and Eden; soon followed a period when the warmly received representative

of the war generation became Enemy Number One in the eyes of the National-Socialists. For Eden now came the most interesting experience of his life ; the trip from the capital of the Third Reich to the capital of the Soviet Republic. Russia had become a member of the League some time previously and when she was received it was Eden's duty to describe the importance of this event, broadcasting from Geneva. His relations with Russia were to a certain extent just the opposite to those with Germany. While in former years he met a certain sympathy in Germany, but later provoked the strongest opposition of the Third Reich, in Moscow he was first known as anti-Soviet, but later the most respected 'bourgeois' politician of the West. His former attitude against the Anglo-Soviet treaty has been mentioned already ; on the occasion of the trial of the Vickers engineers he also spoke sharp words against the Bolshevist dictatorship ; but now the same Litvinoff whom he had attacked a few years before, became his host and guide in the capital of the Soviet Republic. The way he fulfilled his difficult task in Moscow caused general admiration. He contacted Stalin and his henchmen with extraordinary tact and reserve combined with friendship ; he became acquainted with many leading personalities in Moscow who have since become victims of the so-called 'purge.' But his contact with Stalin was the most important. He made a great personal

impression on the Soviet Dictator who soon betrayed that since the revolution no European visitor had been so likeable in his eyes as the young statesman from Great Britain.

In the great Opera House of Moscow the smart English guest in his well-cut evening dress was surrounded by politicians and diplomats of the Soviet and applauded for long minutes by this unique audience which consisted of the ruling class of the Soviets—the proletarians. 'God Save the King' and the 'International' followed one after the other. The comparatively long stay in Moscow—he spent four days in Russia—seemed to be a great success, the principle of the 'indivisibility of peace' was accepted as the fundamental thought of a general European pacification and the full harmony between the foreign policy of Great Britain was established. Harmony was so strong that Litvinoff wished Eden on his departure much success, adding: "Your successes are now ours, too." Apart from a few weak beginnings, the Anglo-Russian co-operation remained a theory, but that was certainly not Eden's fault. From Moscow he went on to Warsaw and Prague; in both cities quite different premises met him, a wholly different atmosphere and two contrasting types of politicians. In Warsaw the old Dictator, nearing his death, General Pilsudski and his cunning, coolly calculating Foreign Secretary, Colonel Beck; in Prague the ancient President Masaryk and his later, unfortunate successor,

Dr. Benes. After Warsaw, Prague was only a courtesy visit ; Poland's refusal had already wrecked the planned Eastern Pact.

Although the positive results of this unique tour were rather meagre—nevertheless serving to emphasise Eden's importance even more—this pilgrimage through half Europe in search of peace had fired the imagination of the masses. Eden became the heroic symbol of the present thirsting for tranquillity and peace. But the physical and spiritual efforts following after a greatly exhausting period, were too much even for Anthony Eden's youth and tenacity. A harrowing flight homewards in a storm was the last effect which led to a physical collapse. First, he had to take an unexpected rest in Cologne and then a holiday of several weeks which put Eden out of public life at an important period. During these weeks the Stresa Conference took place with more frankness and less secrecy of thoughts it might have prevented a great many things which later could not be harnessed. The origin of the Abyssinian conflict lay in the words unspoken at Stresa. To-day many people believe that Eden's presence might have given another turn to the matters. This is not probable, however. He would not have possessed the strength to prevent the outbreak of the long smothered controversy.

Soon after his recovery, Eden was given the futile task of going to Paris and Rome—this was his last meeting with Mussolini—in order to try

and smooth things over, without any hope of success. Laval in Paris, Mussolini in Rome roundly refused to listen to him. It is said that his meeting with the Duce was especially painful ; the Abyssinian conflict was foreshadowed and also the fatal alienation of Rome and London. Although the details of this decisive meeting between Mussolini and Eden are still unknown, so much has been ascertained that there was a passionate and embittered exchange of words. This is supported by the furious attacks launched in the Italian Press against Eden soon afterwards, which were later joined by the German newspapers and have never since been relaxed.

The change in the English Government in the summer of 1935 occurred in a stormy atmosphere of foreign affairs ; in place of the wholly broken and ailing MacDonald, Stanley Baldwin became Premier. He had held the reins of power more or less in his hands even before that. In the Foreign Office Sir John Simon was exchanged for another experienced politician, Sir Samuel Hoare. It was generally believed that Eden would become Foreign Secretary but Baldwin, in spite of his admiration and sympathy for his friend, did not dare to entrust a politician of under forty with the independent conduct of British policy. But this change brought a further advancement to Eden ; he became a member of the Cabinet ; without the title but with the position of a Minister for the League of Nations. He had

no decisive influence on foreign policy, yet he was made responsible for its results. Dutifully he had to declare his solidarity with the Foreign Secretary in the face of the Opposition and had to serve as the butt of their attacks; while the isolationists saw in him the evil spirit of the Government who forced Great Britain into responsibilities and dangerous conflicts through his Continental orientation. In certain newspapers the expression 'the dangerous Mr. Eden' began to appear. Strangely enough the general public was untouched by these influences. Whatever was said in Parliament, whatever the newspapers wrote, the belief in Eden and the faith in his intentions became stronger and stronger in the masses. A political opponent of Anthony Eden, A. J. Cummings, the managing editor of *The News-Chronicle*, recounts in one of his articles a discussion of Eden. Mr. Geoffrey Howard, an old Liberal politician and Yorkshire landowner—a distant relative of Eden—said once to Cummings:

"We never thought that Anthony would ever go very far politically. What is the secret of his success?"

"My reply," continues Cummings, "which I am certain would be endorsed by others who know him far better than I do, was that he had brought into politics a moral and intellectual integrity which was recognised not only by politicians

in all parties but instinctively by the common people."

And in *The Spectator* another publicist wrote on the occasion of Eden's appointment to the Cabinet:

" In these last three years when with each month the international situation has deteriorated and the prospects of disarmament have become increasingly remote, and Europe is once again as it was in 1914, an armed camp, one man has stood out with courage and consistency for the translation of the ideals of the post-war peace system into realities."

And then:

" At thirty-seven he has won a position for himself abroad and in his own country that no man of comparable age has achieved in our times. How has he done it? I would give as the fundamental cause his deep sincerity. Wrong beliefs was not the trouble with our leading statesmen, but that they have ceased to believe in anything at all."

Even if Eden had in the following difficult period of the Abyssinian conflict, the sanctions, the occupation of the Rhineland (to mention only a few stations of the European calvary) often to represent opinions which were contrary to his inner conviction, Great Britain's and the world's public opinion always instinctively felt that this man was waging an honest battle to save Europe from the reign of force. This fight had two fronts. For a long time the world saw only one of them. Eden's superhuman efforts in the League and at

international conferences through experiments of mediation, threats, the mobilisation of the moral forces in the world were directed to prevent the employment of force and the doing of injustice. All this awakened a new hope. But the other battle raged within the British Government where Eden's intentions and methods found a strong opposition and forced him often to withdraw in decisive moments. Why—this is the question we must repeat—why did not he resign and dispose himself more efficiently for the sake of his aims outside the Cabinet? As long as Baldwin remained Premier, it was certainly also the motive of loyalty and affection which determined Eden's actions. He was also justified in the feeling that he could attain many things through his active influence on foreign policy—and prevent even more. The considerations of party politics must also not be underestimated; Eden was and is a good Tory and he could see clearly that, especially in 1935, a demonstrative resignation on his part could have had fatal consequences for the Conservative Party. The young Conservative M.P., Quintin Hogg, speaking in another connection about Eden, had judged his attitude quite correctly:

"The real truth is that Mr. Eden has the sense to know that democracy cannot exist without a party-system. It would be a disaster for the Conservative Party if it lost the constructive idealism of Mr. Eden, but it would also be a disaster to

Mr. Eden. I do not think it will happen. At least I hope not."

But one must also not forget the purely personal elements; it is more than natural that a man at Eden's age does not so easily give up the unparalleled position which he has achieved through the untiring work of ten years.

It would be useless to enumerate all the complications of the Abyssinian conflict or of the Spanish civil war. Up to his resignation Eden had played a guiding part in these chaotic situations. For reasons already sketched his attitude was not uniform. There seems to be a special contradiction that he insisted upon the solution of the Abyssinian conflict through the League and according to its principles and yet consented to the Hoare-Laval plan. But there is no way of telling what happened behind the scenes. Eden always wanted to avoid any semblance of a difference between himself and his colleagues at the head of the Foreign Office.

The elections of 1935 were still characterised by Anthony Eden's activity in the League. His energetic attitude in Geneva, his speeches, the trust which the world gave him and to a certain extent the aggressiveness of the dictatorial states towards this champion of international co-operation gave him a popularity which secured the electoral triumph of the National Coalition. A Conservative politician said that Eden's person alone had brought in every

constituency thousands of votes for the Conservatives. He was the most popular speaker during the whole election campaign; the candidates who succeeded in getting Eden's support were considered fortunate. In Bristol he was expected to speak in a hall capable of holding four thousand people. A fortnight before the meeting twenty-five thousand had applied for tickets. He had hardly time for his own election campaign against his Socialist opponent who had been blinded in the war. A new idealistic wave overwhelmed the country and Eden was its embodiment. Who could have dreamed that two years later all the resolutions of these elections would be destroyed?

Although the Socialists were strengthened by the elections, the Baldwin Government possessed —thanks to Eden—a firm majority. The hero of the election himself had received 35,749 votes, his opponent, J. Perry, 10,930.

CHAPTER VII

FOREIGN SECRETARY

In November, 1935, the elections were held; in December of the same year Eden became Foreign Secretary. The youngest for a century Great Britain possessed. Something more wonderful not even winged fantasy could imagine for a man of forty. But was Eden really so enviable? On the contrary! The Hoare-Laval plan had been foiled through the indignation of English public opinion. Sir Samuel Hoare fell with it; the Baldwin Government itself and especially the Prime Minister was weakened by the crisis. If Eden had taken a stand against the Government or resigned, the gravest consequences would have followed. It is known that Eden decided with a heavy heart to take Hoare's place. Most of what he had tried to build up lay in ruins. Beverley Baxter says that a Member of the Cabinet told him on the day of Eden's appointment:

"If I were offered the choice between taking the Foreign Office at this time or cutting my throat

I would ask for the knife. Eden has only two things ahead of him. Complete failure or partial failure. There cannot be success."

This nameless prophet was only too justified. Eden faced a completely disorganised situation and only a complete unity within the British Government and between England and France could have assured the potency of British foreign policy. But there was no trace of such unity. The policy of sanctions which Eden, after his unsuccessful attempts at mediation represented with unusual vehemence in Geneva—his speech about the necessity of quick and efficient action caused world sensation and is still cited for and against him—was doomed to failure right from the beginning. As long as it was only the question of fine words, there was an apparently close group of the nations behind the British spokesman of sanction projects ; but when the economic and political consequences of the realisation of energetic measures became apparent, hesitation, uncertainty and the search for impotent compromises began. To-day we must acknowledge that there were forces even within the British Government working against the authority of the League. It is a waste of time to probe into the riddles of who were these older Cabinet Ministers who put obstacles into Eden's way. Neville Chamberlain himself had the courage to express his opposition to the sanctions. Eden's struggle in Geneva sometimes gave the impression of strength

and determination but when his words were not followed by decisive action, the countries which took part in the sanctions, felt an increasing disappointment and began to withdraw.

The League and the so-called Council of Eighteen deliberated, resolved and interposed—but at the same time the march of the Italians was unchecked in Abyssinia. The French, fearing from the beginning the German rather than the Italian danger, opposed British initiative on many important questions. Eden's proposals were foiled by half-solutions which only served to embitter and irritate Italy—without preventing the attack of a member of the League against a weak, unprotected country; failing in its main aims.

King George V had seen Anthony Eden as Foreign Secretary only once when the old king was lying ill at Sandringham, near his death. Although the death of the king could have no direct influence on foreign policy—English constitution prevented this—Eden's position became more or less weakened after Edward VIII ascended to the throne. There was more or less unfounded gossip saying that the young king did not approve the official foreign policy of his Government, that he desired to approach the totalitarian states closer. There were no special, 'closer relations' between these two men, the young king and Eden, who were about the same age. But the accession had another, more decisive consequence for Anthony Eden by

hastening Baldwin's resignation. As long as Baldwin was standing at the head of the Government, Eden was the driving power of British foreign policy; even if there was opposition to his methods and aims within the Cabinet, this could never grow into a visible split. Baldwin himself had no ambitions in foreign affairs and gave a comparatively free hand to Anthony Eden whom he had discovered and to his trusted collaborators at the Foreign Office, so in the first place to Sir Robert Vansittart. But when ten months after Edward VIII's accession the abdication crisis shook Britain, forcing all foreign affairs for the time being into the background, it was announced that Baldwin was only waiting for the coronation of the new king to retire. During this gravest constitutional crisis which Great Britain had to endure in our times, he had played a highly harassing and thankless part. When Baldwin's resignation was fixed for the near future, the attacks on Eden increased. He was exposed to them from all sides, the period of his Foreign Secretaryship greatly impaired his popularity. The failures at Geneva and the impotence of the sanction policy turned the followers of the League policy and collective security against him; they were disappointed in their expectations and embittered when Eden, in his first speech as Foreign Secretary, said:

"We shall always be arrayed on the side of the collective system against any Government or people

who seek by a return to power politics to break up the peace "—and then failed to show the strength to put his words into action, trying to defend the compromise-seekers in Parliament. But a section of the Conservative Party and the whole camp of the 'splendid isolation' reproached Eden that, as a spokesman of sanctions policy, he had delivered Great Britain to the danger of war, provoking Italy's bitter enmity. This opinion was strengthened by the attacks of Italian newspapers on Eden; gradually they depicted him as the evil spirit of all the troubles.

The muddle of Geneva, the helplessness of the League, the disharmony in the foreign policies of Great Britain and France had urged Hitler to realise his long conceived plan of the military occupation of the Rhineland. The world, shattered already by the Abyssinian crisis, suddenly faced a new danger of war. The diplomatic acts about the effects, discussions and decisions in Paris and London, following the occupation of the Rhineland, have not yet become public. There is no way to judge how things would have developed if Great Britain and France had used this last opportunity of a resolute stand against one-sided breaches of treaties by Germany. The French reproached the British Foreign Secretary that he had prevented any military measures. On the other hand it is said that France was not in the position to proceed energetically against Germany. The events following

the occupation proved, however, how unjust and slanderous were the accusations against Eden which pictured him as a warmonger. His whole intention was to avoid a difficult conflict and to give Germany's arbitrary action a legal form through an agreement—even if he could only do this after the fact.

To attain both aims he was even willing that the so-called Rhineland Conference should not meet in Geneva as planned, but in London. This change, seemingly so unimportant, was symbolic of the decline of the League and the slow breaking up of the Eden principles. By moving the Council of the League to London it was confessed that the Geneva atmosphere was not helpful for the solution of international conflicts. It was a fatal concession and it must have been especially disconcerting for Eden to be forced to take such an initiative. Nor did this move make the conference more fruitful. Although Eden delivered an excellent speech, exemplary in clearness and moderation, the German delegation, invited after much deliberation, under the leadership of Ribbentrop bore ample testimony of the tone in which Germany planned to speak in the future. The verbose international days of the St. James's Palace passed without any practical decisions.

Italy's attitude had a great part in Rhineland occupation bringing no consequences for Germany. Eden was made responsible for this, too. It was said that if he had not antagonised Mussolini and

insulted Italy by his sterile 'hobby horse of principles,' Italy would certainly have been on the side of France and Great Britain. Thus the contours of a new, threatening grouping of powers—the Rome-Berlin Axis—began to appear.

The failure of sanctions was only the beginning of further heavy setbacks which the democracies had to encounter. Japan ignored all warnings and marched deeper and deeper into China. Eden sent his questionnaire, which has become famous and was so often ridiculed, to the German Government to try and create passable relations on some regulated foundation with the Reich. But the Germans found any reply unnecessary and their attitude remained undefined although it was again and again announced. Before this list of questions was dispatched, rumours said that Eden planned a new trip to Berlin, but this could hardly be the case as the dictators openly showed their enmity against Eden's person not only through their Press but in their official attitudes. Every firm basis of a regulated cohabitation of European nations began to grow unsafe, as the existing international institutions and treaties gradually lost all inner strength; but no new methods could be found to supplant the old ones. Under such circumstances everything pointed to the fact that the Spanish civil war—which had seemed to English people in the first days following its outbreak on the 18th July, 1936, only an interesting piece of news—would

easily become a danger of Europe and a test of the strength of the European powers facing each other. In vain did Eden, together with many other British statesmen, emphasise that Great Britain would refuse to join any block of states in Europe; the well-intentioned words could not retard the evolution in this direction. The process, started by the Abyssinian War, was completed by the Spanish events. The united front of the dictator states, and the Rome-Berlin Axis had become a reality. Through the intervention of foreign powers the Spanish civil war assumed a threatening international aspect and the British Government, in order to prevent a general European conflict, began its difficult task of localising the conflagration. Out of this the tragedy of the so-called non-intervention was born, with all its well-known details; Eden, as the chief creator of the non-intervention plan received a leading part. Anthony Eden's activities became almost superhuman. His private life had to be sacrificed almost completely; often he had even to forgo his fifteen minutes' walk in the St. James's Park which constituted his only rest from the exhaustive work, filling his days and nights. Nobody denied Eden's passion for work and his self-sacrifices, but criticism became only stronger against him. Characteristic of the attitude against Eden was a remark of Atticus, well-known columnist of *The Sunday Times*, who wrote:

"A meteor flashed across the sky and buried itself in the earth—that was the view of Mr. Eden's critics as they sneered and jeered at him on Thursday, making his important speech as difficult as possible."

Eden tried in all these months to safeguard at least the fundamental principles of post-war Europe's order; even if one had to yield in details and was forced to see the practical value of these sadly decreasing fundamental principles by giving up many positions. Eden remained faithful to the idea of the League and of collective security to his very last moment as Foreign Secretary; even if he had to act against his own principles in the endeavour to preserve peace.

The change of Cabinet in Britain, on the 28th May, 1937, proved that even these principles were in danger. Baldwin was followed by Neville Chamberlain. As the new Premier had shown up to now no special interest in foreign policy and alluded only in a sensational speech to the fact that he differed in many things from the Foreign Secretary, nobody could know in the beginning how Chamberlain's and Eden's co-operation would develop. In his speech, Chamberlain mentioned the madness of the policy of sanctions and the results seemed to justify him. Even the most ardent spokesmen of sanctions—as for instance the brother of the late Prime Minister and Eden's former chief, Austen Chamberlain—turned against the preservation of these measures, grown completely

futile; Eden had the sad task of announcing the collapse of sanctions both in Parliament and at Geneva. Naturally this step greatly impaired his authority, even if he knew how to defend his point of view. But there was another great success destined for him. The results of the Nyon Conference were almost wholly his achievement; he was able to announce at that time:

"If this is any good, we shall not have any more trouble. If we do I will eat this"—indicating his hat.

As Anthony Eden's Homburg had become universally familiar all over the world, the story of this optimistic declaration spread all over the world.

Neville Chamberlain had been Prime Minister only a few months when rumours began to spread that between him and Eden differences were becoming increasingly acute. All denials were in vain; Eden himself denounced the rumour of any disharmony shortly before his resignation; the facts showed that Chamberlain wanted to take new paths in his relations to the dictator states. His letter to Mussolini, the mission of Lord Halifax in Berlin, the substitution of Sir Alexander Cadogan for Sir Robert Vansittart, as Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, gave new food foı the gossip. Public opinion said that Eden was forced into the background and Chamberlain was taking the direction of foreign affairs into his own hands.

It was even said that Eden was ill and tired out. A prolonged holiday seemed to be the proof of his early resignation. Chamberlain's own line in foreign affairs became more and more evident; it had nothing to do with Eden's ideals and principles; it emphasised the so-called realistic conception by giving up the League and collective security and contacting the dictators directly. There was no personal controversy between Chamberlain and Eden; on the contrary, the latter proved loyal to the former till the very end.

But the controversies were no longer to be hidden; even the man in the street asked himself how long Eden was to endure this insufferable position. He endured it for a longer time than many others would have done in his place. But he used this period of strengthening decision to express in several great speeches his own attitude more and more clearly and energetically—without, however, attacking Chamberlain directly. These speeches proved that Eden had remained loyal to his faith, in spite of all setbacks and temporary failures and the trust of the English masses grew again in him, even if his political star was in eclipse.

And now one of the most dramatic days of English post-war history followed, the week-end when the bomb of Eden's resignation, foretold for a long time, suddenly exploded. During the previous weeks all signs indicated that Germany was preparing a decisive *coup* against Britain. Chamberlain, afraid

of the consequences of this aggressive action, decided to end Anglo-Italian strife at any price. He was ready to begin direct official discussions with Italy, without waiting for the decision of the League. Eden was not only in principle against such discussions, he also demanded as a preliminary condition the cessation of Italy's anti-British propaganda and the recalling of Italian volunteers from Spain. The Italian newspapers proclaimed it in an increasingly sharp tone that only Eden stood in the path of an Anglo-Italian understanding; as long as he was Foreign Secretary, no normal relations could exist between the two countries.

The English Cabinet had met both on Saturday and Sunday; as a few days before Eden himself had denied any controversy with the Prime Minister and the Government Press had protested against rumours of his resignation, the general public was hardly prepared prior to the 19th February, 1937, for Eden's decision to leave the Government so abruptly. Apparently Eden himself did not know it. On Friday he had promised a detailed answer to a question in Parliament for the following Monday.

CHAPTER VIII

"QUICK RESULTS MAY NOT BE PERMANENT"

DURING the first Cabinet meeting on Saturday, the controversy became so pronounced that Eden tendered his resignation. Several ministers wanted to follow him. There is no doubt about it that Chamberlain tried everything to keep Eden, but for the young Foreign Secretary it was impossible to retrace his steps any farther. He knew that a concession would mean the final betrayal of all his ideals for which he had fought with more or less success but always with his whole heart. His personal prestige was in danger. A decisive contact was made between the English and Italian Governments by a mysterious unknown man—and without the Foreign Secretary. Unfortunately Eden's resignation coincided with a great speech of the German Fuehrer. A few hours before the world found out about Eden's resignation, Hitler's fury was turned upon Eden so that his resignation could be explained as a consequence of Hitler's attack. Even if this direct connection was not true, there was no doubt

that both Mussolini and Hitler had strived to engineer Eden's fall—both through the whole power of their propaganda and through the mobilisation of their influence in England. As a matter of fact Eden's decision was made before Hitler's speech; it was only at Chamberlain's request that he postponed it for twenty-four hours. By his resignation he had drawn the only possible consequence for him; he had realised that he had no more support within the Cabinet for his political goals which he had explained a short time ago in a speech made to Conservative youth in Birmingham:

"I say this especially to the younger generation because the Government to-day must strive in its foreign policy not only for peace in our time but for peace in yours. And if we are to have peace in your time it means that in any agreement we make to-day there must be no sacrifice of principles and no shirking of responsibilities merely to obtain quick results that may not be permanent."

Nothing characterises more the significance of Eden's resignation than the echo which it caused all over the world. Even a year later when an English paper staged a poll it was defined as one of the most important events in this much too eventful year. Eden had the opportunity to cause a Cabinet crisis perhaps even a crisis in the party. He avoided the manifold temptation. Only his two faithful collaborators, the Under Secretary of State Lord Cranborne, and his Parliamentary private

secretary, J. P. Thomas, declared their solidarity and gave up their positions.

Eden's and Chamberlain's exchange of letters and even more so Eden's speech in Parliament in which he explained the reasons of his decision as a simple M.P. to a full House, brought the final proof that the events of the famous week-end were only the final touches of a long development. Eden wrote in his farewell letter:

"The evidence of the last few days has made plain a difference between us on a decision of great importance in itself and far-reaching in its consequences. I cannot recommend to Parliament a policy with which I am not in agreement. Apart from this, I have become conscious, as I know you have also, of a difference of outlook between us in respect to the international problems of the day, and also as to the methods by which we should seek to resolve them."

In his comparatively short farewell speech he proffered the same thoughts a little more in detail. True to his character he avoided at this dramatic turning-point of his life every theatrical effect. His words were dignified, reserved, without any personal animus, but the firmer and more decisive for all that, in his rebellion against the sufferance of the reign of force. Now he was no more checked by the chains of his office which had forced him to keep silent so often. Even if the overwhelming majority in the House supported Chamberlain,

Eden's serious warnings, which were proved true only too soon, made a deep impression. The speech, however, hardly cleared Eden's future position. Nobody suspected what the former Foreign Secretary would plan to do. Was he to draw further consequences and leave the Conservative Party? Would he seek new allies and head a new 'Centrum' Party which would break the old party frame? Or perhaps he would take embittered and disheartened leave from politics to embark on a financial career? This last possibility had some support as it was known that Eden was not rich and his wife had received only a very small part from Sir Gervase Beckett's large fortune. Weeks and months passed without an answer to these questions. Eden went with his wife on a holiday to the South of France. These weeks were the first undisturbed ones of rest for many years. Even after his return he kept his mysterious silence and this provoked new attempts to explain the riddle.

When, after a long silence, he spoke and wrote for the first time, he did it to counsel his country towards national unity and the Government to the strengthening of armaments. In spite of his critical attitude towards the Government's foreign policy, he avoided aggravating the conflict between himself and the Prime Minister. Those who had hoped that on one or the other opportunity he would raise the flag of opposition against Chamberlain, were again and again disappointed. When, at the end of 1938,

he went to America it was believed that he would perhaps originate a crusade for the gathering of all democratic powers in the world. But already on the day of his sailing it was made clear that Eden had no daring plans for his American trips; he was taking it with the approval and full moral support of the Chamberlain Government. His reception in the U.S.A. showed the immense measure of his popularity. Naturally this jubilant reception was caused partly by the 'lust for sensation,' enthusiasm was raised not only Eden's ideals but his physical advantages about which the masses of America had heard so much, his youth, his charm, his elegance. When it was discovered that Eden's so-called elegance did not correspond to the exaggerated expectations, people were a little disappointed; but the more effective his personality was proved, giving a new, deepened importance to Anglo-American friendship which had suffered much after the Munich settlement. No greater appreciation of Eden could be possible than the fact that the totalitarian states maintained: Eden's American visit was the reason for the sharp turn in America's outlook and her support of the democratic powers.

Even if Eden did not come up to the expectations of the great masses, hoping that after his resignation he would become the leader of a new popular movement or new party, to-day he is again perhaps the most popular statesman of Great Britain. At an age when most people just start their political

careers, he is in the eyes of the world, those of his followers and even more in those of enemies a symbol ; a symbol of revolt against the reign of force, of the will to liberty and democracy. In a world where everything hangs in the balance, Anthony Eden's political future is highly uncertain ; but if future events make the building of a peaceful, orderly and free Europe possible, Anthony Eden's co-operation cannot be dispensed with.